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Vain Repetitions

The Protestant Meaning

Batta

Rev. Joseph F. Sheahan



1907

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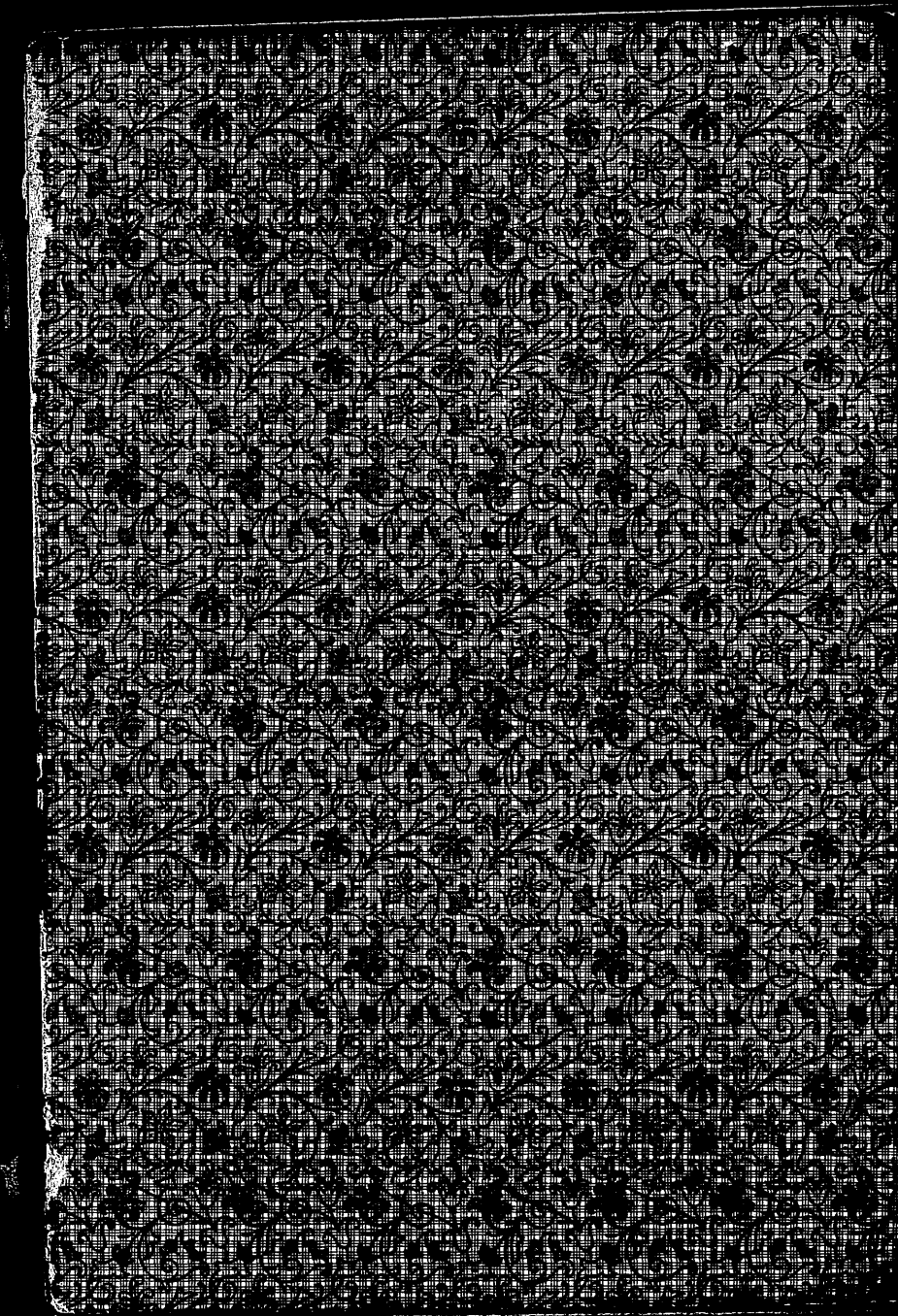
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THE PROTESTANT MEANING
OF
BATTÁ.

BY

REV. JOSEPH F. SHEAHAN.

1901.

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INTRODUCTION.

In St. Matthew vi-7, we read :

“ And when you are praying, **SPEAK NOT MUCH**, as the heathens. For they think that in their much speaking they may be heard.”

The authors of the earliest Protestant versions thought that the “much speaking” referred to was silly speaking, and so put “Babble not much” instead (Tyndale, Cranmer, Geneva).

The authors of the King James version thought that the “much speaking” consisted in foolish repetitions, and so rendered the text: “Use not vain repetitions.”

These Protestant renderings, as is evident, are not versions but paraphrases or interpretations of the text.

The opinion that Christ was condemning babbling or vain repetition, in Matt. vi-7, originated with Protestant scholars. We can find no trace of it prior to the sixteenth century.

In this pamphlet we are looking for the true meaning of **BATTA**, the word which Protestants have rendered “vain repetitions”—and then for the meaning of the text in which it occurs.

My Protestant readers will be surprised when I tell them that Christ never condemned repetition of any kind, that there is no condemnation of repetition anywhere in the Scriptures, that the Hebrew prayers, both ancient and modern, have nothing reprehensible under this head; that although pagan prayers are to be condemned, it is not on account of any repetitions that may be found in them. Whether the reasons that I give are sufficient and satisfactory, it remains for my readers to decide.

About two-thirds of the matter in this volume appeared in the N. Y. Freeman's Journal a year ago.

VAIN REPETITIONS

OR

THE PROTESTANT MEANING OF BATTÀ.

CHAPTER I.

BATTÀ = POLY.

About three years ago I became interested in the Protestant text, "Use not vain repetitions as the heathens" (St. Matthew vi-7), a prohibition that Protestants accuse us of violating by reciting the Rosary, the Litanies, etc., which abound in repetition. No Catholic author that I know of, has ever given this *Protestant* text much attention, or attempted to show that there is no question whatever of repetition in it, unless its implied recommendation. In fact, I have found several Catholic authors, whilst doctrinally correct, so influenced by Protestants, as to use the repetitions of the priests of Baal as an illustration of the thing prohibited in St. Matthew vi-7, and giving the same old stale, ~~unintelligent~~ etymological guesses that, together with the Baal and Diana illustrations, are to be found in nearly all Protestant commentaries. I have been surprised at the amount of sophistry and anti-Catholic abuse to be found in Protestant works on this text.

Until the sixteenth century neither Jews, Christians, Mohammedans nor Pagans ever saw any harm in repetition, nor, with the exception of Protestants, do they see it yet. We think that we have perfect liberty, in addressing Our Heavenly Father. We may ask Him for the same thing in the same or in equivalent words, we may repeat His Name and our petitions to Him a definite or an indefinite number of times, as often, and even oftener than a child does in addressing its earthly father. Some Protestants also believe in this perfect liberty in prayer, but the majority of them think that there is some divine restriction on repetition.

If they are asked the reason for this strange notion (strange to all the world except themselves) they will reply: Christ said: "USE NOT VAIN REPETITIONS as the heathen,"—which we deny. "Why, look in the Bible and you will see that He did." In your Protestant Bible, it is true, these words are found, but are they a correct translation of the words that Christ used? or, rather, are they a correct paraphrase or interpretation?*

Look in our Catholic Bible and you will find no mention of vain repetitions; there you will find this text translated: "SPEAK NOT MUCH, as the heathen," an altogether different meaning, as I will show later on.

Repetitions, like many other things, are of three kinds—good, bad and indifferent. Prayer to God is good, and as a good thing cannot be done too often, the oftener it is repeated the better. Prayer to an idol is something intrinsically bad, and each time it is repeated a new injury is done to God; such repetitions are bad repetitions. Some people have a habit of repeating some word or phrase such as "Great Scott" without any rhyme or reason, nearly every time that they open their mouths to say anything; it is merely a foolish habit, which does neither good nor harm. Such repetitions are vain or useless repetitions. There is no question between us and our Protestant friends about the repetition of bad or indifferent things. Every one will call the repetition of a bad thing a bad repetition, and the repetition of a useless or foolish thing a foolish or vain repetition, but the question is whether it is bad or useless to repeat a good thing, to repeat a prayer to God? Protestants do not, as far as I know, at least in their commentaries on our text, accuse us of repeating prayers that are bad or indifferent, but accuse us of breaking Christ's prohibition, especially by repeating too often the prayer, which Christ in this very place, taught us to say. To Catholics it appears very lu-

*"Use not vain repetitions" is a paraphrase, but not a version, giving probably the sense but not the form of the original (St. Matthew explained by J. Addison Alexander). Alexander is one of the few Protestant scholars who puts it so mildly as to say that the words "Use not vain repetitions" found in the English Protestant version give "probably the sense" of Our Saviour's words; the majority speak as though there was no doubt about it.

dicrous to be accused (of the crime!) of repeating too often the Lord's Prayer, but any of my readers who are familiar with the plentiful Protestant literature on this subject know that one of the heavy charges brought against the wicked Romanists is (the sin!) of repeating too often the very prayer which Christ Himself taught us, and which is therefore the best of all prayers. The following extracts from commentaries by Protestant scholars will show us how they look at this matter :

"BATTALOGESETE.—To repeat the same formula many times, as the worshippers of Baal and of Diana, of Ephesus and the Romanists, with their pater-nosters and aves" (Marvin R. Vincent, in his "Word Studies in the New Testament.")

"The repetitions of pater-nosters and aves in the Roman Church, as practiced by them, are in direct violation of this precept." (St. Matthew, with S.S. Notes. Internat. Series, R. Franklin Johnson.)

"It has often been remarked that in corrupt Christian churches one of the earliest and worst perversions of the truth is the adoption of the very error (i. e., using vain repetitions) which Our Lord here describes as heathenish, and in relation to the very prayer here given to prevent it." (St. Matthew explained by Rev. J. Addison Alexander.)

"In the Church of Rome not only is it carried to a shameless extent, but as Tholuc justly observes, the very prayer which Our Lord gave as an antidote to vain repetitions is the most abused to this superstitious end, the number of times it is repeated counting for so much merit. Is not this just that characteristic feature of heathen devotion which our Lord here condemns?" (Jamieson Fausset & Brown.)

"Protestants condemn the general use of it made by Romanists." (McClintock & Strong's Cycl. Art. *Pater Noster*.)

Here we have some good strong anti-Catholic assertions that we shall examine more at length later on. Christ said something in condemnation of some heathen practice in St. Matthew vi-7 which Protestants have paraphrased or interpreted "Use not vain repetitions, as the heathen."

Then they put Catholics and heathens in the same box and prove to their own satisfaction that we are disregarding the prohibition of Christ. From what I have read on this subject from a Protestant standpoint, I should be inclined to believe that the Roman Catholic heathen is the worst kind of heathen. We poor superstitious heathen Romanists, thinking that we have perfect liberty to address God when and where and as often as we please, a definite or an indefinite number of times, even in the very same words, do not know to what "a shameless extent" we are perverting prayer until we find it out in Protestant books. As none but Protestants are able to find their prohibition in St. Matthew vi-7, I hope that they will let us off, at least, on the plea of invincible ignorance.

I should like to ask our Protestant brethren for an explanation of their text. Do the words "Use not vain repetitions" mean: Use not repetitions, *because repetitions are vain?* or, do they mean: Use not *those repetitions, which are vain?* If they say the first and condemn repetition in itself, they condemn Christ and the Scriptures, and even themselves, for all men use repetition at times. But if they mean: Use not those repetitions which are vain, what are they? Surely the Lord's Prayer, and the inspired words of Holy Scripture, of which most Catholic prayers are composed, are not vain. Protestants have never been able to agree in telling us what they mean by vain repetitions.

There is another question which I should like to ask our Protestant friends, concerning the repetitions which they think Christ has forbidden in His Sermon on the Mount. Did Christ forbid these repetitions *because they were wrong?* or, are they *wrong, simply because Christ has forbidden them?*

If Protestants think that they are intrinsically wrong and forbidden by the natural law, it is a pity that the learned Protestant scholars of the last three hundred years have not clearly pointed out their intrinsic malice. If they think that they are wrong simply because Christ has forbidden them (just as it was wrong for a Jew to eat pork, simply because God forbade it to him) Protestants

should abstain from attacking Jews and Pagans for doing what is in itself harmless, and they should also excuse us, as we are still unable to find the prohibition which was not discovered until sixteen centuries after Christ had spoken it. As Protestants are the only ones who are aware of its existence, they are the only ones who can be guilty of breaking it, and of offending God by doing so.

The majority of Catholics do not repeat the Lord's Prayer oftener than twice a day, at their morning and at their evening prayers. Protestants give us credit for more devotion than the majority of Catholics deserve. This pamphlet, however, is not about how much, or how little, Catholics repeat their prayers, or whether they repeat them at all, but we are to try to find out if Christ ever said anything in condemnation of repetition, whether anything like a condemnation of repetition can be extracted from the words which He used in His Sermon on the Mount (St. Matthew vi-7), or whether the Greek words *Me Battalogesete* can be correctly translated, or paraphrased, or interpreted "Use not vain repetitions"?

In His introduction to the Lord's prayer, according to our English Catholic version, Christ said (St. Matt. vi-7) :

"When ye are praying, SPEAK not MUCH, as the heathens. For they think that in their MUCH SPEAKING they may be heard. Be not you therefore, like to them, for your Heavenly Father knoweth what is needful for you, before you ask him."

According to the English Protestant authorized version, Christ said :

"When ye pray, USE not VAIN REPETITIONS, as the heathen do ; for they think that they shall be heard for their MUCH SPEAKING. Be not ye therefore like unto them ; for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him."

It will be noticed that in one sentence these versions disagree. The Catholic version has "Speak not much ;" the Protestant, "Use not vain repetitions." When versions disagree, we must go back to the original. Ac-

according to St. Matthew, Christ said : ME BATTALOGESETE. Is the Catholic translation correct, or is the Protestant paraphrase correct, or are they both correct, i. e., have they both the same meaning? According to Protestant authors they both are correct ; ours is a literal translation, theirs is a paraphrase of that translation ; much speaking, and vain repetition are the same thing. They are not. If we split up the compound word, BATTALOGESETE, and arrange the Greek words and the two translations in the following way, I think that it will be clear even to those who know nothing of Greek in what they agree and in what they differ :

	LOGESETTE	ME	BATTA
(Catholic) :	Speak	not	much
(Protestant) :	Use	not	vain repetitions

LOGESETTE means, speak ; the Protestant version renders it, use, but since use vain repetitions, and speak vain repetitions, mean the same thing, we have no fault to find with this word. ME means not ; but what does BATTA mean? It means *much*, as I shall show, but does it also mean *vain repetitions*? Since BATTA is the only word or part of a word about which we disagree, we shall put the rest aside and devote all our attention to BATTA.

Of the origin, or derivation, or etymology of BATTA we know nothing. A number of guesses have been made, but they are of no value.

BATTA is not found as a separate word in any of the Greek literature that has come down to us. It is found in combination with RIDZEIN (Battaridzein) and with LOGEIN (Battalogein). This latter verb is found only twice in Greek authors, once in St. Matthew vi-7, the text that we will study, and again toward the end of the fifth century in Simplicius (Ench. in Epictetus 340 [212 C]). It is found in no classic author. In its nominal form, BATTALOGIA (much speaking), it is also found in a few places. The verb is not given in any early Greek lexicon. Since then, it is found neither in Greek literature, excepting two places, nor in ancient lexicons, we must look for its meaning in the ancient translations which were made when Greek was still a

living language, and when the word BATTALOGUEIN was still in use; but first and above all, we must determine its meaning in St. Matthew from its context. From both of these sources, it is certain that BATTALOGUEIN means *much*, and that BATTALOGUEIN means *to speak much*; but neither in ancient translations, nor in the context of St. Matthew, nor anywhere in the Scriptures, can we find any support for the Protestant text. I hope that the reader who does not understand Greek will not be discouraged if I introduce another Greek word, POLY, which also means, much or many. However POLY has been transferred into English and is used in so many compounds (e. g. polygamous, much married; polychromous, many colored), that every one should be familiar with it. BATTALOGUEIN has also been anglicized, and we have it in both its verbal and its nominal form—Battologize and Battology; we have even two English forms, Battological and Battologist, which have nothing corresponding to them in Greek. These words were introduced into the English language by Protestants, and have the Protestant meaning of BATTALOGUEIN.

POLY and BATTALOGUEIN are synonyms; they mean *much*. POLY-LOGUEIN and BATTALOGUEIN are also synonyms, and mean *to speak much*. POLY-LOGIA and BATTALOGUEIN-LOGIA are also identical in sense, and mean *much speaking*.

Before examining the Protestant text, we must satisfy ourselves that our Catholic translation is correct, which ought to be easy, since Protestants admit that it is. I shall give a few quotations from Protestant scholars showing that they consider POLY-LOGIA and BATTALOGUEIN-LOGIA synonyms, meaning, much speaking.

"(Christ) uses two words (Battalogia and Polylogia) but they have the same meaning"—Calvin.

"The explanation of its (Battalogia) meaning is furnished by the expression much speaking, Polylogia, which follows."—Lange, translated by Philip Schaff.

"Battalogia— . . . the same thing which is subsequently called Poly—" Meyer, A Critical Exeg. Handbook of St. Matthew.

Ward in his errata of the Protestant Bible, gives many

of the anti-Catholic mistranslations in the English Protestant versions that preceded the King James or Authorized version of 1611. One of the erroneous translations in the Authorized Protestant version, which is not found in the versions made before its time, is "Use not vain repetitions," (St Matthew, vi-7.) It is true that the Protestant translations made prior to it, mistranslate this very text, by rendering it "Do not babble," but the particular mistranslation that we are now dealing with did not appear until 1611, and hence it is not mentioned in Ward's list. We must first be certain that our version, "Speak not much" is correct, and then we shall show that "Use not vain repetitions" is an incorrect paraphrase, or a misinterpretation. It is unnecessary to go to the trouble of proving that our version is correct since Protestant scholars admit it, but I think it important to give the correctness of our version a little more prominence, and I shall do so by putting it forward in the form of a proposition.

CHAPTER II.

PROPOSITION I.

Our Catholic version of Christ's words (St. Matthew, vi-7), "speak not much," is a correct literal translation.

It will be necessary to keep in mind the whole verse to prove our proposition :

"When you are praying, speak not much (ME BATTALOG-) as the heathens.

"For they think that in their much speaking (POLY-LOGIA) they may be heard."

Protestant scholars in dealing with this text use the nominal form BATTA-LOGIA and the verbal form BATTA-LOGEIN indifferently, for there is no dispute about the part of the verb, or about the word in its verbal or nominal form, but about the meaning of the word in either or both forms, hence for the sake of simplicity and to follow the example set for us, we will speak of BATTA-LOGIA and POLY-LOGIA, although BATTA-LOG in our text happens to be a verb, and POLY-LOG a noun.

Here is our proof in form :

POLY-LOGIA means much speaking ;

But, BATTA-LOGIA and POLY-LOGIA mean the same thing :

Therefore, BATTA-LOGIA means much speaking.

The major, as every boy and girl who has studied Greek a few weeks knows, merely states the meaning of the Greek word Poly-logia. The minor states the identity of Batta- and Poly-, which will be evident to anyone who carefully looks over the text. Protestant scholars admit it. The Protestant versions made prior to King James, also affirm the identity of Batta- and Poly-, for they translate them both by the same English word. They have mistranslated them both, but they have at the same time acknowledged their identity by mistranslati-

them both by the same word,* and their identity is all that we are asking for in the minor of our syllogism.

*TYNDALE A. D. 1534—And when ye praye, *bable not moche*, as the hethen do: for they thincke that they shal be herde, for their *moche bablynges* sake.

CRAMNER A. D. 1539—But when ye praye *bable not moche*, as the hethen do: for they thincke it wyll come to passe, that they shal be heard for their *moche bablynges* sake:

GENEVA A. D. 1557—Also when ye pray, *bable not much*, as the heathen do: for they thyncke to be heard for their *much babling* sake.

If we look at the translations made prior to the Reformation, not only do we find that they translate *battalogia* and *polylogia* by the same word, but we also find that they use the correct word. All the ante-Reformation translations of this text are correct, e. g.

WICLIF A. D. 1380—But in preiynge nyle ze *speke moche* as hethen men don, for thei gessen that thei be herd in her *moche speche*.

If one reads the Fathers in Protestant translations, he may imagine that the Fathers thought that repetition was condemned in Matt. vi-7. For Protestant translators, thinking perhaps, that the Fathers held the same views as themselves, sometimes attribute to them statements that they never made. The following is a comment of St. Gregory on the text (Matt. vi-7), as it is given in a Protestant translation:

"True prayer consists rather in the bitter groans of repentance than in the *repetition of a set form of words*."—(Trans. by Rev. Mark Pattison, M. A., Fellow of Lincoln College).

I looked at the original and found the following :

"Sed veraciter orare est amarus in compunctione gemitus, et non composita verba resonare."

I should translate these words :

"True prayer consists rather in the bitter groans of repentance, than in the *resounding periods of an oration*."

By what process can any one get "the repetition of set forms of words," from "Composita verba resonare?"

COMPOSITA VERBA means words that have been put together to make up a speech or composition. This phrase has no notion whatever in it of repetition. It merely represents the synthesis of words that go to make up the literary production. The delivery of the speech or composition is expressed by the word RESONARE. This word is also the common ground of comparison between the contrasted audible groans of the penitent and the resounding words of the declaimer. A man's religious views often make him mistranslate a very simple sentence. It seems to have made this translator of St. Gregory, impervious to the saint's humor, and unable to see the alliteration and the pun in the sentence that he is putting into English.

"Sed veraciter orare est amarus in compunctione

"Gemitus (resonare understood), et non composita

"Verba resonare."

About twelve centuries before Luther, St. Jerome made the Latin translation of the Bible known as the Vulgate. St. Jerome was one of the most eminent biblical and Greek scholars of all time. He wrote when Greek was still a living language, when Batta-logia in both its verbal and nominal form, was still in use, and giving its meaning in St. Matthew he translates it "Nolite multum loqui," Speak not much; and there is no reason for not believing that this is also the translation that he found in the Latin versions that preceded his own. Nolite multum loqui, is probably the earliest translation, in any language, of the Greek words of St. Matthew, ME BATTALOGESETE.

J. D. Michaelis in his essay on Battology says: See the efforts of the ancients in translating the command ME BATTALOGESETE. The Vulgate and the translations previous to St. Jerome without any variations in the codices read: Nolite multum loqui (speak not much).

This is not a study in Greek. The reader need not know any Greek at all, except that the two Greek words Batta-logia and Poly-logia are synonyms, and mean much speaking. I shall sum up all the Greek that he need know, to follow our argument, in this equation:

Batta-logia = Poly-logia (much speaking), which may be abbreviated by eliminating logia (speaking) from both sides, leaving:

$$\text{Batta} = \text{Poly (much)}.$$

We intend to examine the crop of Protestant sophistries that have enveloped Batta, and to see how they have extracted "vain repetitions" from it, but these dry preliminary statements are necessary to understand what will follow. I will conclude my remarks about the identity of Batta-logia and Poly-logia by asking the reader to examine the text, which is a compound sentence, and see, if it is not evident from the logical or grammatical connection, of the two members of this sentence, that Batta and Poly are synonyms:

“When ye pray ME BATTALOGESETE, as the heathens

“For they think that in their much speaking (POLY-LOGIA) they may be heard.”

The identity of meaning of Batta and Poly is so clear that if Batta were lost, and not found in any manuscript of St. Matthew, from the rest of the sentence, it would be certain that the missing word must be Poly or a synonym of Poly. Let us write out the text, omitting Batta.

“When ye pray do not ——— as the heathens.

“For they think that in their much speaking they may be heard.”

The first member tells us not to do something which the heathens do. The second tells us why they do it, hoping thereby to be heard; and it also mentions what it is, in which they place their hopes of being heard, “their much speaking.” Hence it is evident that the heathen thing prohibited in the first member is much speaking, and if the word were lost, its meaning would be supplied from the rest of the sentence. Calvin summed up all that we are asking by saying: “Christ uses two words (Batta and Poly) but they have the same meaning.”

But the meaning of Poly-logia is much speaking.

Therefore, the meaning of Batta-logia is much speaking.

Therefore, our Catholic translation in which both these words are rendered much speaking, is correct.

The next point is to determine the meaning of much speaking. What is the much speaking on which the heathens rely, on which they place their hopes of being heard? Every one knows what much or many means; they are the opposites of little and few. They express a very simple notion of quantity. Much speaking, therefore, is speaking much or many things. It is making a long speech. The only idea contained in the phrase “much speaking” is that of length; it prescinds altogether from the quality of the speaking, it merely tells us something about its quantity; much speaking means a long speech, and its opposite, little speaking, means a little or short speech. Of course, our speaking has

some quality—it is wise or foolish—it is a connected systematic exposition of one subject, or it is disconnected, rambling talk, which it is a waste of time to listen to, but these and other qualities which may belong to the speech or speaking must be expressed by some other words, or must be known from some other source than the adjective much or many (POLY or BATTA). “Much” speaking gives us only one point of information about the speaking, its length. It means a long speech, and since speaking to God is called prayer, much speaking to God means a long prayer. To emphasize its meaning, and, in order to give any one who wishes to assail my statements a definite point of attack, I shall put it down as a proposition.

CHAPTER III.

PROPOSITION II.

The phrase "much speaking" contains in it no notion of anything but of length; it means a long speech; and if it be directed to God, a long prayer.

It may seem strange that I should insist on the meaning of so simple a word as much or many, but sometimes simple facts that ought to be clear even to a child are obscured and hidden under heaps of learned verbiage. Much or many, in connection with speaking, is to be taken in its obvious sense. In the word POLY-LOGIA, therefore, or in its synonym. BATTA-LOGIA, there is no other notion than that of length, in speaking.

Lengthy speeches made to God, or long prayers, are mentioned in the Scriptures, it might seem, only to be condemned.

"Wo to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites: because you devour the houses of widows, praying long prayers."—St. Matthew, xxiii-14).

"Beware of the scribes * * * who devour the houses of widows, feigning long prayers."—(St. Mark, xii-38).

"Beware of the scribes * * * who devour the houses of widows, feigning long prayers."—(St. Luke, xx, 46-47).

The prayers that Christ heard, and approved of, were short:

The prayer of the leper: "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean."—(St. Luke, v-12; Mark, i-40; Matthew, vii-2).

Jairus: "Lord, my daughter is at the point of death, but come lay thy hand on her, that she may

be safe and live."—(St. Luke, viii-41; Mark, v-22; Matthew, ix-18).

The two blind men : "Son of David, have mercy on us."—(St. Matthew, ix-27).

The Syrophenician woman : "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously troubled by a devil."—(St. Mark, vii-24; Matthew, xv-22).

The ten lepers : "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us."—(St. Luke, xvii-13).

The publican : "O God, be merciful to me a sinner."—(St. Luke, xviii-13).

The penitent thief : "Lord, remember me when thou shalt come into thy kingdom."—(St. Luke, xxiii-42).

The Apostles : "Lord, save us, we perish."—(St. Matthew, viii-25).

St. Peter (sinking) : "Lord, save me."—(St. Matthew, xiv-30).

The prayers which Christ himself said were short : In Gethsemane : "O my Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me." His prayer for his executioners : "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And the model prayer, which he taught us, is short.

By contrasting long and short prayers, as I have just done, it may look as though a strong case could be made out against long prayers. It might seem that the conclusion following from these facts is, that long prayers have been condemned by Christ. But no, long praying and long prayers are intrinsically good, there is nothing wrong in them. Those who have concluded from Christ's words that they are forbidden have fallen into that very common sophistry of putting more in their conclusion than they can find in their premises. Christ tells us to avoid one kind of much speaking, or long prayer, that of the heathens, or hypocrites; to say that all long prayers are, therefore, condemned is to say something that Christ never said, and to arrive at a conclusion that has nothing to support it. Nowhere in the Scriptures are long prayers condemned, and only in one place (St.

Matthew, vi-7), are we told not to imitate the long prayers of the heathens or hypocrites. Moreover, when Christ forbade the long prayers of the heathens or hypocrites, He did not forbid them on account of their length, but for another reason. Take notice that Christ emphasises not so much the long prayers, as the men who indulged in them, or who pretended to do so.

"Speak not much, *as the heathens* . . . Be not you, therefore, *like to them*" (St. Matthew, vi., 7-8). The people evidently revered the Scribes and Pharisees, and thought them saintly men on account of their long prayers. Christ does not say, "Beware of the Scribes, on account of their long prayers." His meaning is rather: "Beware of the Scribes, *in spite of* their long prayers;" and when He says, "Woe to you, Scribes," He does not pronounce this woe on account of their prayers, but on account of their injustice, which they have made all the greater by doing it under the cloak of piety. Besides, in His denunciation of the hypocrites He does not say, that they prayed long or said long prayers, but that they defrauded the widows under the "pretence" of long prayers, "feigning" long prayers. (Mark, xii-38; Luke, xx-46; Matthew, in the Greek, xxiii-14).

We shall put down another peg, showing how far we have advanced in the explanation of our text.

CHAPTER IV.

PROPOSITION III.

The much speaking, or long prayers, of the heathens are only once condemned in the Scriptures (Matthew, vi-7), and in this place they are condemned, not on account of their length, but for another reason; long prayers, therefore, as such, are nowhere condemned in the Scriptures.

Many of Christ's prayers were short, it is true, but other prayers of His were long. His prayer for His disciples on the night before He died takes up a whole chapter in St. John, xvii. This prayer is longer than any prayer of the hypocrites or heathens given in the Scriptures; He spent more time in prayer than any man that ever lived upon this earth, and He still, without ceasing night or day, is ever making intercession for us (Hebrews, vii-25).

Nowhere in the Scriptures is there any restriction put on repetition, nor is there any limit put to the length of our prayers. In these two things we have perfect liberty.

If we want to get a clear concept of what Christ has prohibited (Matthew, vi-7), we must take one point at a time for consideration, especially since this text has been enveloped in so much Protestant sophistry.

One thing is clear, viz. : that the heathen prayers that are condemned were long; but in what did the heathen much speaking consist? In what did the long heathen prayers differ from the long prayers sometimes used by the worshippers of the true God? How did they differ from the long prayer of Solomon (III. [or I.] Kings viii.-iii., 23-25)? of Esdras (ix., 6-15)? of Christ (John xvii)?

Certainly they differ in their object, or in the persons to whom they were addressed; these prayers were addressed to the true God, the pagan prayers to idols, imaginary deities, or to devils. But this is not the point at issue; our Saviour is speaking here only to those who were worshippers of the true God, and He is speaking of the *manner* of addressing His heavenly Father; He tells

them not to address **Him** in the same manner as the pagans addressed their false gods; or to be more precise, Our Saviour is speaking of the contents of the pagan prayer, which made it so long.

We want to know something of the composition, contents, or make-up of the long pagan prayer, and fortunately we do not have to go far to find it, for Our Saviour refers in this very place to it (Matthew, vi-8):

“Be not you therefore like to them;
For *your heavenly Father knoweth* what is needful
for you, before you ask him.”

It is not necessary for us to tell God our needs, for He knows them better than we do ourselves. But the pagans, having lost the idea of the true God, did not regard as omniscient the deities that they worshipped in His stead. They thought that it was necessary to inform them of their needs, to show them what was wanted, as a necessary preliminary to asking their assistance. Hence the pagan prayer consisted, first, in a description of their needs, and since their gods had limited knowledge, it was necessary to explain all their needs in full, and often to go into details about themselves, their families and friends and the wants of their country if they wished the aid of their gods in all these things, hence the pagan prayer by its nature was often very long.

Sometimes the pagan prayers were short. In the contest between the pagan priests and Elias, the priests of Baal cried, “O Baal, hear us.” Elias used the same petition, “O Lord, hear me.” Both prayers were but one short sentence: “Hear us,” “Hear me.” The pre-arranged agreement between Elias and the pagan priests gave sufficient information to the pagan god of what was wanted of him, so all that the pagan priests needed to do on this occasion was to cry for help. The only difference in their prayers was in the persons addressed; in form they were identical. The God of Elias could and did hear him. Baal could not and did not. There are long Jewish and Christian as well as pagan prayers, but as a rule pagan prayers are the longest on account of their false notion that instruction and persua-

sion are necessary in prayer, as well as petition. In our prayers petition alone is necessary. Pagan prayers are, therefore, of their nature long, and Christian prayers only accidentally so, and since things are designated by those properties which are distinctive and characteristic of them, long prayer, and much speaking, are proper names for the heathen addresses to their deities. It must be understood that mere length is not wrong, nor is it the reason of any condemnation of heathen prayer; it is the want of belief in God's infinite knowledge that underlies it, and which makes information therefore necessary; and also the want of belief in God's wonderful love of us, and His desire to give us everything that we need which is not prejudicial to our salvation, for the pagans thought that it was necessary to use arguments to convince and persuade their gods just as if they were dealing with men. Length in prayer, therefore, is not wrong, but the want of faith that makes it necessary, and which makes pagan worship an abomination in the eyes of God. Pagan prayer, whether short or long, is essentially wrong, it is the worship of devils (Psalm xcv-5) or of some caricature of God; it is the substitution of some creature whether real or imaginary, in the place of the Creator.

"He orders us, therefore, not to make long prayers. Long, not by reason of the time spent in prayer, but on account of the multitude of things that are said in it. For those who pray ought to persevere in it. 'Continue steadfast in prayer,' says the Apostle (Romans, xii-12). He does not, however, tell us to compose a prayer of ten thousand verses and to recite it all, which He insinuates when He says: 'Do not speak much.' (Chrysostom).

"A multitude of words was necessary for the Gentiles, on account of the demons, who did not know what was wanted until they were informed by their words; hence it is added: 'For they think that they will be heard on account of their much speaking.' (Gloss.) Catena Aurea. l. c.

The heathens regarded their gods as beings who had human passions, who were influenced by motives as we are, and who needed to be persuaded to grant favors, as do the mortals who inhabit the earth; hence the art of rhetoric was employed in pagan prayers to persuade their gods to grant their requests. The men who composed the pagan prayers were often poets whose descriptions and exhortations to the gods were beautiful poetical compositions. The descriptions of their wants were expressed in the delightful imagery that the oriental mind so much loves, and their fervid appeals to their deities were oratorical productions that were often models of style. The whole pagan prayer was a finished literary composition such as would naturally delight and move men, and was intended to persuade and render propitious the pagan gods. Such pagan prayers were naturally attractive and would be prized on account of their literary excellence.

It is a great mistake to imagine that pagan prayer was nothing but silly rambling nonsense; to call it babbling, and to translate Our Saviour's words, "Do not babble like the heathen," as the Protestant versions prior to the authorized have it, shows a delightful ignorance of pagan literature and of pagan history. This blissful ignorance or forgetfulness, is displayed only by Protestant commentators, and by some Catholic authors,* who have been captivated by the Protestant etymological guesses at the origin of the word "BATTA."

The Fathers of the Church never looked on pagan prayer as mere babbling. Knowing something of pagan literature and culture they considered the pagan prayers condemned by Christ as finished literary productions and not babbling or vain repetition.

*Our own Kenrick, influenced by his Protestant reading, was so charmed with both the old Protestant mistranslation and the new that he shows us his predilection for both of them in his commentary. In St. Matthew, vi-7, he gives "Do not babble," and even gives us another mistranslation, "Do not gabble," which is a little worse than that of the Protestant versions.

In the commentary on Ecclesiasticus, vii-15, in a footnote, he upholds the translation of the King James version, "Vain repetitions, without earnestness, are to be avoided." Matt. vi-7.

"And truly all much speaking comes from the Gentiles, who give more attention to the elegant delivery of their prayers than to the cleansing of their souls, and by this kind of prayer they endeavor to move God." (Augustine).

"True prayer consists rather in the bitter groans of repentance than in the resounding periods of an oration." (Gregory) *Catena Aurea*. l. c.

That such a notion as "vain repetition" in prayer to God should have got into the minds of men and have been inserted into St. Matthew, vi-7, is certainly astonishing, since Christ and his Apostles, by word and example, have urged the necessity of repetition in prayer, and since the living creatures in heaven are incessantly repeating God's praises, and since there is ten times as much repetition in the prayers and praises of God in the Scriptures as there is repetition in all the pagan authors extant which were written during the same period. The proper epithet for repetition in prayer to God is "useful or necessary," not "vain." But so insane was the hatred of the Church in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that the ridiculous mistranslation, "use not vain repetitions," was put into Protestant Bibles without any opposition, and is retained in them until the present day. Why Catholic commentators have given the Protestant mistranslation so little attention I do not know. Perhaps they thought it so stupid as to be hardly worthy of attention. A few modern Catholic authors, however, can be found who seem to see nothing wrong in the Protestant text.

Napoleon said: "There is only one figure of speech, and that is repetition." Truly, it is the most effective of all. And we have an example here before us, for Protestant scholars by constantly repeating their "vain repetition" text have come to believe that it is a correct translation of the words used by St. Matthew. They never dream of asking themselves if it is. They take this for granted. All their efforts are to try to bolster it up by etymological shuffling, and by illustrations borrowed from the Scriptures and from profane authors.

CHAPTER V.

THIS PROTESTANT TEXT UNKNOWN TO LUTHER.

Luther seems to have known nothing of this Protestant "vain repetition" text. Probably it was not in use in his day, or at least had not been brought to his attention, for in commenting on St. Matthew, vi-7, he recommends frequent repetition in prayer; he condemns long prayers (especially the Divine Office) and recommends instead short ejaculations of a word or two, or some single formula often repeated. These are his words:

"Wherefore the ancient fathers made no mistake in saying that we should not use many long prayers. They praised little, short, efficacious, ejaculatory prayers of a word or two, sent heavenward (as that of the publican in the Scriptures: O God, be merciful to me, a sinner!), which any one can quickly and frequently repeat while he is engaged in reading, writing or any other business."

Luther wanted to have a whack at that daily public offering of prayer and praise to God which the Church enjoins on her priests, deacons, sub-deacons and some others, and which we call the Divine Office, the Canonical Hours, or the Breviary. It takes nearly an hour daily to recite it attentively and devoutly, and it takes a great deal longer if it is chanted. This prayer is undoubtedly long, and Luther thought that he had a fine chance to bang away at it by using the words of Christ, "Speak not much" (Matthew, vi-7), as a cudgel.

Instead of the long string of Psalms, Scripture readings, Homilies on the Gospels, Hymns, etc., that make up the Office, take a short prayer of a word or two, or some short formula, he says, and repeat it often. So the very text that later Protestants used for condemning

repetition Luther used as an argument for recommending it.

In the International Illustrated Commentary, edited by Schaff, we have the following: "There may be vain repetitions of the Lord's Prayer. * * * Hence Luther calls it 'the greatest martyr.'" Whether Luther is correctly quoted and interpreted here or not, I do not know. I have not noticed this phrase in his writings. But if he should recommend repetition in prayer in one place and condemn it in another, that's nothing. He had the privilege of changing his mind and of contradicting himself. The only point that I wish to bring forward is that when Luther was, ex-professo, treating of the text we have under discussion, he found in it nothing against repetition in prayer, but, on the contrary, he found there an argument for it.

CHAPTER VI.

CALVIN THE INVENTOR OF "VAIN REPETITION?"

As far as my reading goes, I think that the credit of having invented, or at least of having suggested "vain repetitions," belongs to Calvin. In his comment on our text, he says: Battalogia, "supervacua est et putida repetitio."—Battalogia is "vain and stinking repetition." This was so delicious a morsel that it was seized upon and inserted into the Authorized Protestant version of 1611, and although the Revised Protestant version has many changes in the Sermon on the Mount, this phrase was allowed to go untouched, although some slight changes were made in the very text in which it occurs.*

The translators of the King James Bible took only "vain repetitions" from Calvin. They omitted the word "stinking." Why, I do not know. Perhaps they thought that it did not sound nice. However that may be, this word "stinking" which they left out is much better than the words which they retained, for it is merely vulgar, stupid and irrelevant; it has nothing at all to do with the text; whereas, "vain repetition," far from being merely irrelevant, is opposed to the true meaning of the text, for this very text, the only one which Protestants use for attacking repetition, is the very one in which Christ indirectly recommends it. Even Luther was able to see this.

I think that it would be more correct to say that Calvin suggested vain repetitions, rather than invented, for I do not think that he imagined that there was any condem-

*According to the English Hexapla, "Use not vain repetitions" made its first appearance in English in the King James, or Authorized Protestant version of 1611, but in the edition of Tyndale's New Testament, printed at Andover, from Bagster's London Ed. of 1837, "Use no vayne repetitions" is attributed to the Genevan version of 1557.

nation of repetition in Christ's words. He simply wanted to give vent to his anti-Catholic hatred.

The special object of his attack is the Divine Office, just as it was the object of Luther's attack in his comment on the same text; but since there is very little repetition in the Divine Office, no more, probably, than might be found in some Protestant prayer books* there is no reason why he should have attacked repetition here; he simply wanted to brand our prayers as "vain and stinking," and to get some sort of a Scriptural backing for his assertion. The word repetition happened to come into his mind as something on which he might paste these epithets, but there are many other nouns, I have no doubt, which would have served his purpose just as well. I shall give Calvin's comments and the reader can see for himself that "repetition" has not been thought out or evolved from the text; it just slipped in by accident; he could not think of any other better noun at the time, so he let it go. "Vain and stinking" was what he wanted to say, and he said it. Whether these beautiful epithets hit the length of our prayers, or any repetitions that may be found in them, or something else, did not make any difference to Calvin, as long as he managed to find an excuse for flinging them at us. It does not make any difference to me, as far as my argument goes, whether the word "repetition" was used by Calvin intentionally or accidentally, or whether the translators of the Authorized Protestant version borrowed it from him or from some one else. It is equally false as a translation or interpretation of the text in any case; but I shall give Calvin's words, together with their context, and my opinion that his use of the word is only accidental, and then let the reader form his own opinion on the subject, and keep it.

*In the Episcopal Book of Common Prayer, the Evening Prayer for the 28th day of the month begins with Psalm 135 [136], which consists of 27 verses, and in each verse is repeated the refrain: "For His mercy endureth forever."

CHAPTER VII.

WAS CALVIN'S INVENTION OF VAIN REPETITIONS MERELY ACCIDENTAL?

I think that it was, and so I shall give here all that Calvin has to say on the text, and then the reader can see for himself if my opinion is well founded. If the reader thinks that Calvin carefully thought out the phrase, "Battalogia is vain and stinking repetition," then the entire credit of its invention belongs to him (unless some prior claimant can be found for that honor). He says:

"**'SPEAK NOT MUCH.'** Christ reproves another fault in prayer, namely, much speaking. He uses two words, but they have the same sense, for Battalogia is vain and stinking repetition, and Polylogia is empty loquacity (*inanis garrulitas*). Moreover, Christ reproves the silliness of those who, in order that they may persuade and move God, pour out many words. The continuance in prayer praised here and there in the Scriptures is not at variance with this teaching. For when prayer springs from earnest desire the tongue does not supplant the heart, and then God's grace is not sought after by means of an empty outpouring of words, but on the contrary, the loving heart sends forth its sighs like arrows which penetrate the heavens.

"Meanwhile the superstition of those is condemned who put their trust in their long whispered mutterings in order to gain merit before God. We see the Papacy so imbued with this error that it thinks that the chief element of prayer is loquacity, for the more words one murmurs out the more exactly he is thought to have prayed. Long and prolix chants, as if to soothe the ears of God, are forever resounding in their temples.

“‘YOUR FATHER KNOWETH.’ This one remedy is sufficient to purge and take away the superstition that is here condemned, for whence comes this foolishness that makes men think that they are making great progress when they weary God with their much speaking, unless they imagine that He is like a mortal man who needs to be taught and reminded? But every one who is persuaded that God not only cares for us but that he even knows all our wants, and that he foresees our desires and troubles, before He is admonished, he omitting all much speaking, will be content to continue his prayers just long enough to exercise his faith, and he will perceive that to approach God like a rhetorician, in order to move Him by a wealth of words, is absurd and ridiculous.”

Some of these statements are good and true, but they are spoiled by abuse. To get a clearer notion of what Calvin says, let us take a sentence at a time and examine it.

CALVIN: “Speak not much. Christ reproves another fault in prayer, namely, much speaking.”

That is correct. Calvin does not give the Vulgate translation (*Nolite multum loqui*), he gives that of Erasmus (*Ne sitis multiloqui*) instead; their grammatical structure is a little different, but the Greek, the Vulgate, and that of Erasmus, which Calvin follows, are identical in sense. All through his comment, excepting one phrase, there is no mention of repetition, but a dozen times he speaks of much speaking, or silly, lengthy speaking, in prayer. Here are all the words he uses: *Multiloqui*, *multiloquium* (three times), *inanis garrulitas*, *multum verborum profudunt*, *inani verborum fluxu*, *longis sussurris*, *loquacitas*, *plus verborum demurmurat*, *longi prolixique cantus*, *verborum copia*. If Calvin thought that *Battalogia* meant vain repetition, it is surprising that he did not make use of this notion somewhere in his comment on the text; but since he did not, it is most probable that he merely used the word repetition as a peg on which to hang his epithets “vain and stinking.”

CALVIN: [Christ] "uses two words, but they have the same sense."

Correct.

CALVIN: "For Battalogia is vain and stinking repetition, and Polylogia, empty loquacitas."

No. Battalogia and Polylogia have not these meanings; if they had, then they would not have the same sense; for repetition and lengthy speaking are not by any means the same thing. Psalm 135 [136] is full of repetition, but not of loquacity; a lawyer in summing up an important case may make a very long speech, lasting hours, and yet not go over any of his ground twice, not repeat at all. Length and repetition, both in speaking and in everything else, are two altogether different things; it is wonderful what a muddle every Protestant commentator gets into in explaining this text (Matt. vi-7). If a man in speaking of some profane subject were to make so many illogical breaks he would be considered wanting in ordinary intelligence. Notice that in his first translation, which is that of Erasmus, Battalogia is rendered "Speak (not) much." But here two lines later on he says Battalogia is vain and stinking repetition.

Battalogia and Polylogia simply express length in speaking, and nothing else; they are not qualified by any such adjectives as vain, stinking, foolish, silly, empty, superstitious, etc. These words, no doubt, relieve the feelings of the Protestant scholars who indulge in them, but they cannot find anything to justify them in our text, or anywhere else in the Scriptures.

CALVIN: "Christ reproves the silliness of those who, in order that they may persuade and move God, pour out many words."

Very good. Pouring out many words is much speaking. But many words used to persuade and move, are not "vain repetitions," nor are they "empty loquacity or garrulity." Such things persuade neither God nor men.

CALVIN : (last line) "To approach God like a rhetorician, in order to move Him by a wealth of words, is absurd and ridiculous."

Very true : But a rhetorician does not employ "vain repetition," or, "inane or empty loquacity." He employs the most convincing arguments that he can think of, clothed in the most elegant diction.

CALVIN : "Meanwhile, the superstition of those is condemned who put their trust in long whispered-mutterings" (sussurris).

This is a thrust at us priests, who daily recite the Divine Office. It is recited or chanted in public, aloud ; but when we recite it privately, there is no reason why we should disturb the neighborhood by shouting out our prayers. God will hear them just as well when we retire into our rooms and recite them in whispers, or even inaudibly and even if we are naturally devoid of grace, and if the recitation of our prayers is so inartistic as to deserve to be called "sussurrant" muttering, it does not matter ; God looks deeper than that. When Anna in the grief of her heart indistinctly or inaudibly muttered her prayers before the tabernacle, Heli thought that she was drunk, and told her so :

"As Anna had her heart full of grief, she prayed to the Lord, shedding many tears, and.....saying : if thou wilt give to thy servant a man-child, I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life.....as she multiplied prayers before the Lord.....Heli observed her mouth. Now Anna spoke in her heart, and only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard at all. Heli therefore thought her to be drunk, and said to her : How long wilt thou be drunk ? Digest a little the wine, of which thou hast taken too much." (I. Kings [I. Sam.] i. 10-14).

Notwithstanding the inartistic manner of Anna's prayer and the bad impression that she made on Heli by her mumbling to herself, it was pleasing to God, and He heard it, and gave her a son, Samuel the prophet. Calvin and the rest of the reformers and as many of our Protestant brethren as wish to do so, may treat our prayers with

as much aversion and contempt, as did Heli the prayer of Anna, it matters little to us, so long as they are acceptable to God.

CALVIN : " We see the Papacy so imbued with this error that it thinks, that the chief element of prayer is loquacity, for the more words one murmurs out, the more exactly he is thought to have prayed."

Calvin well knew that this statement of his was a simple falsehood. I call attention to it, because in it he mentions the bull's eye, at which his shafts are aimed, the Papacy. The daily offering of prayer that the Papacy imposes on its ministers consists of a number of the Psalms, Scripture readings, Homilies on the Gospels, a very short life of some saint, hymns, and some petitions; it is certainly long, loquacious, Calvin prefers to call it, since that is a repulsive name; but its characteristic is not repetition. If Calvin had thought that repetition was condemned in this text (Matt. vi-7), he would have attacked the Rosary, the Litanies, or some other prayers in which there is a good deal of repetition, but he does not; and in attacking the Papacy in this place, he would have said, the Papacy thinks that the chief element of prayer is repetition. He does not; he says; "the Papacy thinks that the chief element of prayer is loquacity." And instead of saying "the more words one murmurs out" the more exactly he is thought to have prayed; he would have said: "The oftener he repeats the same words," etc. From a careful study of his words, it appears that it was length in prayer, flavored with some adjectives of his own, that he was attacking, and not repetition; the word repetition therefore in his definition of Battologia seems to have slipped in accidentally, as a word to fill up a sentence often presents itself to the mind of a writer, which he accepts and puts down, to save himself the trouble of hunting for a more accurate word.

CALVIN : " Long and prolix chants, as if to soothe the ears of God, are forever resounding in their temples."

(Notice "long and prolix"—not "repeated" chants).

Very true. Religious communities of men and women in the Catholic Church, scattered here and there throughout the earth, are forever raising their hearts and voices to God in prayer and praise ; beginning here on earth, what they hope to continue to do in heaven. throughout all the ages of eternity,

“ And we will sing our Psalms
All the days of our life
In the house of the Lord.”

—(Isaias, xxxviii-20).

despite all the abuse of Calvin, Luther and the rest of the reformers.

From a careful reading of Calvin's somewhat disjointed comment, then, it seems to be a rush of anger and abuse, rather than a carefully thought out exposition and application of the text. After his incorrect definitions of *Batologia* and *Polylogia*, his comment proper begins, and in it we have nothing about repetition, but merely an attack on lengthy prayers; prayers intended to persuade and move God by their length or rhetoric; the chanting or recital of the Divine Office, and the Papacy for enjoining it; hence “vain repetition” was not the product of careful study, but an accidental find, at first, used most probably, as a handy hook on which to hang some silly anti-Catholic abuse (“vain and stinking”).

Possibly Calvin got the notion of repetition from Beza, who translated this text “*Ne eadem blaterato.*” Do not babble the same words.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MEANING OF THE TEXT.

"When you are praying, speak not much as the heathen."—Matthew, vi-7.

We have given our attention so far to the Protestant mistranslation, "Use not vain repetitions;" now, however, we shall take the correct translation given above, and develop its meaning.

LONG PRAYERS.

The only notion contained in "much speaking," as we have seen some time ago, is that of length; much speaking is a long speech, and in the present instance, since the much speaking is that used in praying, what is condemned here is long prayers.

DESCRIPTIVE PRAYERS.

We also know something of the contents of the long prayers that Christ condemns. Do not pray in this way, He says: "For your Father knoweth what is needful for you, before you ask Him." The long prayers condemned, gave God (or the gods that the heathens addressed) information about their needs; they contained a description or account of everything that they wanted, or which they thought good for them. It is a very grievous insult to God, it is equivalent to a denial of His existence, to think that anything is unknown to Him, and that it is necessary to inform Him of anything. When we pray, we go to God as beggars, not as teachers. Instead of teaching Him what we need, we ask Him to

teach us what we need, so that we may know what to ask of Him. "Lord, teach us to pray," (Luke xi-1). When God wants to give us anything He first puts the thought and the desire of it into our minds and hearts, and urges us by His grace to ask Him for it, and if we listen to His inspirations, and ask for what He prompted us to beg of Him, He will grant it.

But it was necessary for the heathens to teach their gods (the devils) what they wanted, otherwise they would not know what was required of them.

The polished pagan put his petitions to his deities in the most elegant and persuasive language. The prayers of the cultured pagan were not "babbling" or "silly repetition." Protestants have not been able to find a single example in Homer, Virgil or any of the pagan poets, to support such an opinion.

The next question that naturally suggests itself is, "Why did Christ say: "Speak not much, as the heathen"? Why did he not say: Speak not much, as the hypocritical Pharisees, for it was not the heathen that He was then condemning, but the Pharisees, for their heathenish practice. If it were only the heathen, and not any of the Jews, that were guilty of the heathenish manner of prayer that our Saviour is condemning, there would have been no occasion for Him to refer to it here.

"The error was also common among the Jews, else Christ would not have rebuked it." (St. Matt. with S. S. notes, Internat. series, R. Franklin Johnson, D. D.)

To brand anything as heathenish was to make it detestable to a Jew. The heathen and the Pharisee had the same style of long prayer, but their prayers did not proceed from the same motive. The earnest pagan prayed at length to let his gods know his needs, because he thought, that they could not know his wants unless he stated them.

Such lengthy prayers were sensible and necessary in the heathens, that the devils might know their wants and

help them. But no Jew ever said or thought that it was necessary to teach God his needs, for he knew that God is omniscient. The long pagan prayer was based on the denial of one of God's attributes, His infinite knowledge; in its origin it was blasphemous. Our Saviour does not say or hint that the prayers of the Pharisees were blasphemous, but He shows the beautiful long prayers of the Pharisees to be identical in their style with the blasphemous prayers of the heathen, and thus annuls whatever attractiveness these prayers would naturally have in the eyes of the people; the Pharisees prayed simply and solely to be seen, heard and admired by men.

LENGTHY, DESCRIPTIVE PRAYERS, NOT INTRINSICALLY WRONG.

If we did not mention the things that we needed, either specially or in a general way, we could not pray at all; we have some examples of detailed description in the inspired petitions in the Holy Scriptures. If we find relief for our souls in pouring out to God all our needs in minutest detail, if it be any help to devotion, by all means let us do so. The pagan prayers were lengthy and descriptive; very well, but this is not the reason for their condemnation. We must go farther. Christ is not condemning length; His own prayers were sometimes long. He is not condemning description or detail, some of it could be found in His prayers. He is not condemning repetition. His own prayers were often repeated. He is not here condemning superstition. What He is condemning here, as in so many other places, is hypocrisy. Let us see.

HYPOCRITICAL PRAYERS.

Let us take the first half of the sixth chapter of St. Matthew, (verses 1-18), and read carefully all that Christ says about alms-deeds, prayer and fasting. Our Saviour is insisting on only one point—that we should do our good works for God and not that they may be seen and

admired by men. This part of His sermon opens with the words :

“Take heed that you do not your justice before men to be seen by them ; otherwise you shall not have a reward of your Father who is in heaven.” (Matt. vi-1).

Then He singles out alms-deeds, prayer and fasting, and accuses the Pharisees of doing these not to please God, but to be seen by men :

ALMS: “Sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honored by men.”

PRAYER: “The hypocrites, that love to stand and pray in the synagogues and corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men.”

FASTING: “For they disfigure their faces that they may appear unto men to fast.”

The only object that the Pharisees had in doing good was to be seen and admired and praised by men. “And all their works they do, to be seen by men.” (Matt. xxiii-5).

In praying, they could be both seen and heard. The reverent posture and gestures could be seen, the words could be heard, and the composition and pious declamation would naturally awaken more admiration than the mere posture or gesticulation accompanying its delivery.

“Take heed that you do not your justice before men, to be seen by them,” is the dominant note in this part of our Saviour’s mountain sermon (vi., 1-18). Alms, prayer and fasting are the three divisions of the subject, and He shows how the Pharisees had perverted each of these good works, doing them not to please God, but for their own glory. I have read commentary after commentary by learned Protestant scholars to see if they perceived any unity of thought and treatment in our Saviour’s discourse on alms-deeds, prayer and fasting, and to see if they consistently expounded it from this point of view throughout, but I did not find a single one. Of course if

the discourse is treated in this logical manner, it is impossible to get "use not vain repetitions" into the text. Our Saviour puts His general proposition first. Take heed that you do not your justice* before men. (Matt. vi-1). He then follows with the three divisions of the subject, alms-deeds, prayer and fasting, and under each heading he condemns the Pharisees for the motive which they had in performing these good works, and He exhorts His hearers not to give alms, not to pray, not to fast† as they did.

If any one will read the first eighteen verses of the sixth chapter of St. Matthew, I do not think that he can find anything else there, but this one thought and its amplification. Do not your good works before men to be seen by them, but do them for God. If Christ's sermons were treated like those of a mere scholar, no one would think of tearing a word or sentence out of its context, and of building theories and denunciations of his neighbors on it. The one dominant thought running through all this sermon on alms, prayer and fasting, may, perhaps, even be traced in the petitions of the prayer which Christ taught us as a substitute for the long oratorical productions of the Pharisees :

"Hallowed be *Thy* Name ; *Thy* kingdom come ; *Thy* will be done." The motive of the Pharisees' prayer as well as of everything else that he did was, hallowed or glorified be *my* name.

Of the three means of glorifying themselves and of gratifying their vanity, it seems to me that prayer was the favorite one with the Pharisees, for besides the honor to be had from the making of the public prayer itself, it afforded them an opportunity of making the bystanders acquainted with their generosity and their mortifications. "I fast twice in the week ; I give tithes of all that I possess." (Luke, xviii).

*In the authorized Prot. version this text is incorrectly rendered: "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men," but it has been corrected in the revised version.

†It is worthy of note that Christ does not say that the Pharisees fasted ; he says : "They disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast."

Christ dwells longer on the abuse of prayer than He does on that of alms-deeds or fasting, and condemns the Pharisees chiefly for it; and He has given us a special parable about the Pharisee who went up into the temple to pray (Luke, xviii), but no parable about the Pharisee who fasted or gave alms.

If the Pharisee gave alms solely to be honored by men, if he fasted only to be seen by men, if he prayed in public places simply for the purpose of being seen and admired by men, with what motive did he compose the prayers that he recited in public? Evidently the composition and delivery of the prayer was undertaken with the very same motive that prompted him to recite it in a conspicuous place. This was his motive and his only motive.

They prayed not from any supernatural motive, but simply to be admired. Their prayers as well as their other acts were all done to gain public esteem. Our Saviour's words on this point ought to be sufficient: "And all their works they do for to be seen by men," (Matt. xxiii). St. Chrysostom's comment on these words is worthy of mention: "*Non enim simpliciter ait (Christus) quod faciunt opera sua ut videantur ab hominibus, sed addidit omnia.*" (Cat. Aurea. Matt. xxiii).

EXTEMPORE PRAYERS.

Since the long prayers of the Pharisees were made to awaken the admiration of those who heard them, what sort of prayers must they have been? Certainly those best calculated to attain this end. They must have been beautiful compositions, such as would delight the poetic Oriental mind, and must have been delivered with all possible solemnity. They must have been in rhetoric and elocution oratorical models. Silly, rambling talk would have exposed them to ridicule, or would have rendered their prayers unworthy of notice, and would have defeated the very end for which they were made. A recital of the prayers prescribed for use in the synagogues would—and probably often did—afford these men consumed with vanity an opportunity for some ostentation; but the so-called extempore prayer is the one which

affords the fullest opportunity for the exhibition of all one's natural talents and graces. It is to be remembered that Christ never condemned the prayers prescribed for use in the synagogue. He, on the contrary, approved of them by participating in them all the time of His life here on earth, and nowhere in the Scriptures is there any condemnation of them. Hypocrites of all ages have a craze for extempore public prayer. Such prayers are made not to please God, but to exhibit themselves. The only example of a Pharisee's prayer which Our Saviour has given to us, and which He condemns, is an extempore prayer (Luke xviii), and this prayer is not an isolated instance, but a specimen. There is nothing in the Scriptures nor in any ancient document to make us think that the Pharisees had any liking for repetition in prayer. Repetition in prayer is the Scriptural, Christ-given, most simple, most natural, method of prayer, and one which affords little or no opportunity for display, and hence was not likely to find favor with those who courted public admiration. The Pharisee's ideal prayer, the one which allowed him the fullest means for personal display, was the extempore prayer.

CHAPTER IX.

PUBLIC EXTEMPORE PRAYERS CONDEMNED.

Summary Explanation of the Text: "Speak Not Much as the Heathen." (Matthew, vi-7).

So far, we have seen, first, that the prayers condemned by Christ were lengthy, that is the only notion contained in the phrase "speak much."

In the next place we find that it is implied in the words, "Your father knoweth," etc., that these prayers were full of descriptions or accounts of the petitioners needs. For the pagans this was necessary; but for the Jews, whom Christ addressed, it was not, so their use of this pagan style of prayer was for some other purpose.

From what we know of the cultured Greek and Roman pagans, we conclude that their prayers were not silly babbling, or silly repetitions, but beautiful oratorical compositions.

Next, taking a wider view of Christ's words, taking in the whole of the immediate context, all that He says of alms, prayer and fasting (Matt. vi., 1-8), we find that the only thing that He is condemning is the motive that the Pharisees had in doing these good works (Matt. vi-1), which was the motive of all their works (Matt. xxiii-5): "For all their works they do to be seen by men"

The conclusion, therefore follows, that since they prayed to awaken public admiration, they used what would be best suited for that purpose, and the prayer that affords the fullest opportunity for personal display, oratorical effort and self-laudation is the public (so-called, although often miscalled) extempore prayer.

"Speaking," or "speeches," is a good name for Pharisaical prayers, for, though nominally delivered at God,

they are really speeches for the audience. Such prayer-speeches are not confined to the clever Pharisees or to the cultured heathen, nor did they cease with Apostolic times. They are sufficiently common in our own day and in our own land. Not to mention prayer meetings, at the opening of our legislatures and on other public occasions, our Protestant ministers do not neglect so excellent an opportunity of displaying their literary accomplishments in telling God what the country needs, and once in a while even a Catholic priest on like occasions gives a similar exhibition. Who is there who has witnessed one of these beautiful prayer-speeches who imagined that the orator was as anxious to have God hear him as he was to have his audience delighted with his effort?

The prayers, then, which Christ condemned, are those favorite prayers of Protestants and Pharisees and heathens—the public so-called, although often well prepared and studied, extempore prayers. In commenting on their vain repetition text, Protestant scholars eulogize extempore prayer and condemn repetition. They have the matter badly mixed up, for they are recommending what Christ implicitly condemns, and are condemning what He implicitly recommends.

Is there anything wrong in beautiful prayer, in prayer expressed in beautiful language? No, certainly not; whatever is best and most beautiful should be used in the service of God. Many of the prayers in the Scriptures, and many of the prayers of the church, are most beautiful. Is there anything wrong, intrinsically, in extempore prayer? No; every one uses it to some extent, but the inspired words that have come from God through the sacred writers and the prayers of the Church, the Spouse of Christ, are better, and we naturally prefer to address God in these words which we know are most pleasing to Him, but we are free to use words of our own if we wish, whenever we will. Is there anything wrong in long prayer? No; although if one is in earnest the long prayer will be the exception, not the rule. Was there anything intrinsically wrong in praying in the synagogue and at the street corners (Matt. vi-5)? No, certainly

not ; prayer can and should be made in every place (I. Tim., 2-8). The long prayer and the prayer made at the street corners were wrong on account of the motive that prompted the Pharisees in making them, their insane thirst to be seen and admired by men ; but a man, if he be in earnest, will naturally and usually employ short formulas of prayer, and repeat them often. All these things which the Pharisees did were good in themselves, otherwise the people would not have admired them, but the motive which they had in doing them was the leaven which corrupted them all (Luke, xii-1).

CHAPTER X.

REPETITION IN PRAYER RECOMMENDED.

Now concerning repetition, which Protestants have foolishly tried to extract from Battalagein :

In the first place, we have seen that no such notion is contained in this word.

In the next place, the following text, "Your father knoweth what is needful for you before you ask Him," cannot be reconciled with a condemnation of repetition. For repetition, whether wise or foolish, does not give any knowledge of our needs. All the knowledge that is conveyed, if there be any, is conveyed in the first petition, e. g. "Lord, save me,"—the hundreth time that it may be repeated adds not a particle of additional information to that contained in its first utterance. Repetition does not give additional knowledge, but additional force, the eagerness and earnestness of the petitioner may grow at each repetition ; the willingness of the one petitioned to grant what is asked, may become greater at each renewed request, but there is no more knowledge on either side by reason of the repetitions than if there had been but the first petition.

Again, if we study our text with its whole context (Matt. vi., 1-18), we are still further convinced that the Protestant vain repetition text is irreconcilable with the context, for there is nothing in long continued repetition to attract attention and admiration (Matt. vi-1 ; xxiii-5). Hence the repetition of the formulas of prayer, which formed a part of the service of the synagogue, was not what Christ here condemns. We have a sample of repeated prayer, and of its effect on the multitude, given by the synoptists. The blind man of Jericho, when he heard that Jesus was passing by, began to cry out "Son

of David, have mercy on me ; Son of David, have mercy on me." The three Evangelists tell what effect his repeated prayer had on the people ; many of them rebuked him, and told him to keep quiet (Matt. xx-31 ; Mark x-48 ; Luke xviii 39), but Jesus listened to him and gave him his sight.

The only sample that we have of a Pharisee's prayer (of thanksgiving) is one that contains no repetition, and the only one of Christ's nightly prayers, when He retired to pray, that is recorded, is all repetition :

THE PHARISEE, standing, prayed thus with himself : "O God, I give Thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, as also is this publican. I fast twice in the week ; I give tithes of all that I possess." (Luke, xviii-2).

CHRIST : "He fell upon his face, praying and saying : O My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me. . . . Again He went the second time and prayed. . . . And He prayed the third time, saying the same words." (Matt. xxvi., 39, 42, 44).

Are not the parables of the unjust judge and the midnight visitor, exhortations to repetition ? The first prayer of the widow to the unjust judge was not answered, but because she continued its repetition, at last it was heard. (Luke, xviii., 3-10).

The friend who called at such an unseasonable hour at first was refused, but by repeating his knocking and repeating his prayer, at last it was granted. (Luke, xi).

If Christ condemned repetition, He would have condemned the Scriptures in which it abounds. He would have condemned the heavenly spirits who are endlessly repeating His praises. (Apoc. iv-8 ; Isaias vi-3).

He would have condemned Himself, and especially that prayer that He said in Gethsemane, the night before He died. There is no foundation in the text (Matt. vi-7), or in its context, or anywhere in the Scriptures, or in reason, for the silly Protestant mistranslation, "Use not vain repetitions."

In our text itself (Matt. vi-7), we have an implied exhortation to repetition.

If our petitions be short (e. g., like those of the Lord's prayer), and if we are urged to spend a long time in prayer, how can we reconcile the two? If our petition be short, and we spend a long time in begging God to give us what we want, we cannot do so unless by repeating the same petition many times in the very same, or in equivalent, words. Our Saviour's disapproval of long prayer, therefore, taken with His exhortation to continue long in prayer, is an implicit recommendation of repetition in prayer. Perseverance and repetition in prayer are almost synonymous. Has any Protestant attempted to show how any one can continue long in earnest prayer without much repetition? Christ spent whole nights alone in prayer. What words he used, when He used them, we do not know, except in one instance, on that memorable night in Gethsemane. Then His prayer was short, very short, and often repeated.

The Protestant paraphrase, "Use not vain repetitions," therefore, is not merely a misinterpretation, or slight distortion of the meaning of the text, but rather a reversal of its meaning, an interpretation put into the mouth of Christ, which makes Him condemn what He really (taken with His exhortation to perseverance) in this very text implicitly recommends.

CHAPTER XI.

THE STOCK ILLUSTRATIONS : BAAL AND DIANA.

We have one example in the Scriptures of a heathen petition, the prayer of the priests of Baal (III. [I.] Kings, xviii., 26-37); we have also one example in the Scriptures of heathen praise, the shouts in honor of Diana.

But we have no example in the Scriptures of heathens using the kind of heathen petition that Christ refers to in Matt. vi-7, when He says, "Speak not much, as the heathen," for the heathen prayers that He alludes to there were those that consisted in a detailed description of their wants, as we have already shown. The prayer of the priests of Baal was not a description of their needs, but a petition as simple as any petition should be. As far as its length, its form and its repetition are concerned no fault can be found with it whatever. The examples of Baal and Diana are altogether irrelevant if *Batta* is correctly translated and understood; but as they are dragged into nearly every Protestant commentary as illustrations of the Protestant misinterpretation, "Use not vain repetitions," I shall notice them here.

Our Saviour (Matt. vi., 7-8), is speaking only of petition, of prayer in the strict sense of the word, of asking God for what we want. "Your Heavenly Father knoweth what is needful for you before you ask Him." The worshippers of Diana were not asking here for anything (Acts, xix); they were not praying to her; they were shouting her praises. Our Saviour is not speaking here (Matt. vi-7) of praise, but of petition or prayer.

It was foolish for the priests of Baal to ask Baal for anything, for he could not help them. No such person as Baal existed outside of their imaginations. It was foolish to praise Diana, for the same reason. Moreover,

it was a great crime, for Baal and Diana were substituted by the heathens in place of Him, Who is the Creator and Lord of all things, and they were petitioned and praised as the Creator only should have been petitioned and praised.

The sin in the prayer of the priests of Baal consisted in addressing the sun-god, as it is only lawful to address the God Who made the sun and all things. The priests of Baal cried out, "O Baal, hear us," with the same hope and belief that Elias had when he cried, "Hear me, O Lord, hear me!" They attributed to Baal the power which Elias attributed to God. As "Baal" means "Lord," the cry of the priests of Baal might be truthfully rendered, "O Lord, hear us; O Lord, hear us!" Their cry was the same as that of Elias, "Hear me, O Lord, hear me!" Their crime was in addressing to a creature words which should only be addressed to the Creator, and in using them with the same meaning as we do when we address them to God.

It is astonishing to find Protestants so totally muddled in commenting on this text, as to think that the repetitions of the words addressed to Baal constituted their offense.

Do these gentlemen think that if priests of Baal cried out only once, "O Baal, hear us," that their prayer would have been good and proper? There was repetition in their prayer, and repetition in the prayer of Elias, and both prayers were alike in words and sense. The reason why the priests of Baal saying "Hear us, O Lord, hear us," did wrong, and why Elias saying "Hear me, O Lord, hear me," did right, was that Elias addressed the Creator of the Universe, Who could and did hear him, and that the priests of Baal addressed something that had neither life, nor sense, nor power to hear or help them.

The crowd at Ephesus, when they heard that their goddess was attacked, cried out: "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" (Acts, 19, 28). Probably at first a tumultuous procession marched through the streets, swelling their ranks by the war cry, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" The mob having been sufficiently aroused

* * * a rush was made for the theatre (Abbott on the Acts), and when they reached the theatre, for about two hours they kept up the cry, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" (Acts, 19, 34).

On the first Palm Sunday a vast crowd went with our Saviour from Bethany, and they were reinforced by another multitude from Jerusalem, which met them, and the people spread their garments and cut down boughs from the trees and strewed them in the way, and that great multitude, both before and behind him, cried out, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" etc., and this shout was kept up for two hours or so, whilst the great procession moved on towards Jerusalem, up the streets of the Holy City and into the Temple, and when Christ reached the Temple even the children there took up the cry and shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" (Matt. 21; Mark, 11; Luke, 19; Jo.. 12).

Why were the repeated shouts of praise for two hours in honor of Diana wrong, and the repeated shouts of praise two hours or so in honor of Christ right? Any child should know, although I have not found a single Protestant commentator giving the reason. To give divine praise to Diana was wrong—was a great crime—because she was a creature or a figment of the imagination; to give divine praise to Christ was right, because He is the Creator.

I shall give a few extracts from Protestant scholars to show how Baal and Diana are used as illustrations of the Protestant text "Use not vain repetitions," and to show how we wicked Romanists are guilty of the same superstitious heathen practices as the priests of Baal and the worshippers of Diana.

"For the heathen practice of incessantly repeating the name of God or some single formula, see I. K. 18, Acts 19 The precept is against the superstitious repetition of a form in the hope of being better heard by God which is the point of Elijah's taunt to the prophets of Baal." (Com. and a Rev. of the Translation by Bishops and other clergy of the Anglican church Ed., by F. C. Cook, M. A.)

COOK :—" For the heathen practice of incessantly repeating the name of God or some single formula, see Kings and Acts."

This is not a heathen practice as I have shown, but a most natural and most universal practice, not only of heathens, but of Jews and Christians, of men of every tribe and tongue and nation, and even of the living creatures in heaven (Apoc. iv-8).

COOK :—"The precept is against the superstitious repetition of a form

I have already shown that it is nothing of the sort. Protestants have mistranslated the text. Christ never said anything at any time or in any place against the repetition of a form. All that Christ or any of the writers of the Holy Scriptures said about repetition was in praise and commendation of it.

COOK :—" The superstitious repetition."

The learned Bishops and others, in this learned Commentary edited by Mr. Cook, ought to tell us what they mean by superstitious repetition, and then let them, if they can, show that Catholics were ever guilty of such a thing.

COOK :—"The superstitious repetition which is the point of Elijah's taunt to the prophets of Baal."

These learned scholars and their editor can see a good many points that have no existence outside of their heads.

It is not the point of Elijah's taunt. Elias did not say ironically : Cry oftener, cry longer. He said : Cry *louder*, your god may be a god like one of us men, who may go to sleep and need waking ; or who is busy eating his dinner or talking. Yell louder to attract his attention. Elias does not say you have not been crying often enough, he says mockingly, you have not been crying loud enough for your god to hear : " And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, cry aloud ; for he is a god ; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey *or* peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked," (Prot. version).

"The word here refers unquestionably to long continued prayers filled with irrelevant unmeaning repetitions. Thus the prophets of Baal prayed in their contest with Elijah." (John J. Owens, D. D., LL. D. :)

OWENS :—"Prayers filled with irrelevant repetitions. Thus the prophets of Baal prayed."

What was irrelevant in the prayer of the prophets of Baal? Irrelevant? Could their prayer have been more to the point? Was the prayer of Elias more relevant? It was not. Both Elias and the priests of Baal prayed alike in directness, in simplicity, in the same form of words: O Lord, or O Baal, hear us. The only difference in their prayers was that the priests of Baal directed their prayer to the sun-god, who could not hear them and Elias directed his prayer to God, Who made the sun, and Who could and did hear him.

OWENS :—"Unmeaning repetitions."

If there is no meaning in the words, "O Baal, hear us, O Baal, hear us!" neither is there any meaning in the words of Elias, "Hear me, O Lord, hear me!" Does a prayer that means something, lose its meaning by repeating it?

"[The worshippers of Diana] Cried out. The imperfect is graphic; they continued crying. This reiteration was a characteristic of the oriental orgiastic rites." (Prof. Marvin R. Vincent, Word Studies in the N. T. Acts xix. p. 555).

Was it any more characteristic of them than of the modern newsboy? I think not. The newsboy can beat them at reiteration; for more hours of the day and for more days of the year he will cry "News, News," than the worshippers of Diana ever shouted: "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." Reiteration is more a characteristic of earnestness than of orgiastic or any other rites.

The power of repetition is shown by the Protestant text itself. Notwithstanding its ridiculous absurdity, and the still more ridiculous explanations and illustrations of it, by constant repetition it has come to be regarded even by learned Protestants as true.

There is only one species of repetition that Christ insisted on, and that is, repetition of our petitions to God; in fact repetition means primarily and usually renewed petition (re-petition), petition after petition; the climax of absurdity is reached when petition after petition to God is declared vain, for it is this very thing that Christ has so strongly urged us to practice; when our first or second or third petition is not answered, we should petition God again and again.

God has given us liberty, perfect liberty, in praying to Him; the Protestant-vain-repetition-restrictions on our liberty are nonsensical. We are free to pray to God a thousand times a day if we will, we may in our petitions even try to imitate the living creatures who, in their praises, never rest day or night, but cry out unceasingly: "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, and who is, and who is to come." (Apoc. iv-8).

CHAPTER XII.

PARALLEL PASSAGES.

Parallel passages are a great help in exegesis, but no parallel passages can be found anywhere in the Scriptures for the Protestant vain repetition text. However, there are three texts which are often alleged as such; two (Eccl. v-2 and Prov. x-19), are found both in Catholic and Protestant Bibles, the third (Ecclus. vii-15) is found in one of the books of the Old Testament that Protestants have excluded from their Bible. I shall take them in order.

Eccles. v-2.—“Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart be hasty to utter anything before God, for God is in heaven and thou upon earth; therefore, let thy words be few.

“For a dream cometh through a multitude of business; and a fool’s voice is known by multitude of words.” (A. V.)

Here there is mention of rashness, of hastiness, of a multitude of business and a multitude of words, but where is there any condemnation of a few words often repeated? Where is there any allusion to repetition at all, whether vain or otherwise? In the Oxford Teachers’ Bible, Mt. vi-7 refers to Eccles. v-2, and this text refers us back again to Mt. vi-7 and to Prov. x-19, which we shall now notice :

Prov. x-19.—“In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin, but he that refraineth his lips is wise.” (A. V.)

Here there is no question whatever of words addressed to God, but of words addressed to our fellow men, and of

the great difficulty of saying much without saying something foolish and injurious to our neighbor, and of the consequent wisdom of restraining our tongues. There is no connection whatever between this text and Matt. vi-7. The third text given as a parallel for the Protestant paraphrase, "Repeat not a word in thy prayer" (Ecclus. vii-15), seems at first sight to support the Protestant text, and it has been so often used for this purpose and has been so often misunderstood even by Catholics, that it is worthy of a separate heading. The word "repeat" was found once in the Protestant authorized version of the Old Testament in Prov. xvii-9, "He that repeateth a matter separateth very friends." In the revised version this text is rendered, "He that harpeth on a matter separateth chief friends."

In the New Testament the word "repeat" is not found at all; in the Protestant version, it is true that "Use not vain repetitions" still remains, but let us hope that in the next revision of the Protestant Bible it will disappear, and then the word "repeat" will not be found in their Bible at all. But it is found in our Catholic version in Ecclus. vii-15, "Repeat not a word in thy prayer," the verse that we shall now consider.

ECCLÉSIASTICUS, CHAPTERS VII. AND I.

In chapter vii-15, we have "*Kai me deuteroses logon en proseuke sou*," "Repeat not a word in thy prayer." "*Deuteroo logon*" is given by the learned Grotius and by Lud. Cappellus and others as equivalent to "*Battalogo*" (Critici Sacri l. c.) (We have seen, however, that they are not equivalent). This is the only text in the Scriptures that seems to offer some support to the Protestant vain-repetition paraphrase, and it is the only text in this connection that presents some difficulty. The defenders of the vain-repetition text would be glad to make more use of Ecclesiasticus than they do, if it were not that by proving that Ecclesiasticus and their text mean the same thing, they would make it appear that Christ was quoting from Ecclesiasticus; which would not be desirable, after having excluded this book from their

Bibles. I shall give here the whole of the fifteenth verse : chapter vii. :

“ Be not full of words in a multitude of ancients, and repeat not a word in thy prayer.”

“ Logon ” means a whole speech as well as one word, but it does not matter at present whether the prohibition in the verse is against the repetition of a single word, a sentence, or a whole speech.

To get some light on the meaning of the 15th verse of the seventh chapter, let us look at the 23d verse of the fiftieth chapter where repetition in prayer is also mentioned. The author of Ecclesiasticus is speaking of Simon the high priest, and this is how he describes him :

“ He shone in his days as the morning star in the midst of a cloud, and as the moon at the full, and as the sun when it shineth, so did he shine in the temple of God. (Verses 6, 7).

“ When he went up to the holy altar, he honored the vesture of holiness. (Verse 12).

“ Then coming down, he lifted up his hands over all the congregation of the children of Israel, to give glory to God with his lips, and to glory in his name : And he repeated his prayer. . . .”

This glory which he gave God “ with his lips,” or, his petitions to God for his people, is what he repeated.

How is chapter vii-15 to be reconciled with chapter 1-23, where Simon the great and holy high priest, coming down with outstretched hands to bless his people and to give glory to God with his lips, REPEATED HIS PRAYER?

How is chapter vii to be reconciled with the fact that the author himself often repeats his words in his prayers? e. g. . . . :

O Lord, father, and owner of my life. . . .

O Lord, father, and God of my life. xxiii 1 and 4.

Have mercy on us. . . .

Show us the light of thy mercies.

Have mercy on thy people. . . .

Have mercy on Jerusalem. xxxvi, 1, 14, 15.

It is a rule in hermeneutics that the obscure and difficult passages in a work are to be interpreted by those that are clear. He mentions with approval the repetition of the prayer of the high priest, he repeats his prayers himself, he cannot therefore be supposed to stultify himself by condemning in chapter vii what he practices, and approves of in chapter 1. Whatever therefore chapter vii-15 means, it cannot be a prohibition to repeat our petitions to God.

This text in chapter vii of Ecclesiasticus deserves more attention from commentators than it has received. If the best MSS. and translations support the present accepted reading, its meaning needs elucidation.

Everyone who has studied the text carefully might offer some original explanations of it, but all I have to do here is to remove objections. Whatever value there might at first appear to be in chapter seven as a prop for the Protestant vain-repetition text, is neutralized and vanishes, as soon as the twenty-third verse of the fiftieth chapter is brought forward.

CHAPTER XIII.

A LITTLE SHELL-GAME ARGUMENT.

Three-card monte and the little shell game are played in the same way, one is played with cards and the other with shells, but they are the same in principle, and there are several varieties of the game. The little shells are laid on a board (three thimbles or any other hollow vessels would do as well). The operator shows you a pea or the kernel of a nut, or some other small object, which he will slip under one of the shells. You watch him and say: "Here, you put it under this one," but when you lift it up you will find that it is not under it, but under one of the others. Now we shall see how the little shell game is played in trying to slip a meaning under the word "Batta-logein," from which vain repetitions may be extracted. Protestant scholars tell us that the word Batta-logein first means: "To stammer;" and that later on it came to mean: "To use vain repetitions." At present we have nothing to do with the later meaning; the little shell game is played with the first alleged meaning of stammering. But before examining the game I want to give a few quotations:

"The original word means to stammer." (DeVette.)

"The original word literally means to stammer." (Dean Mansfield, quoted by Rev. Jos. Rickaby, S. J.)

"The original word literally meant to stammer." (Com. and a Rev. of the Translation by Bishops and other clergy of the Anglican church. Ed. by Cook.)

"The correct sense of the Greek word (literally to speak stammeringly) is given in our English version." (The Internat. Ill. Com. by American and English scholars. Ed. by Schaff.)

"As Hesychius correctly perceived (*Batta-logein*), is to be regarded as a case of onomatopoeia . . . and meaning properly speaking to stammer." (Meyer.)

"A word formed in imitation of the sound, *batta-logein*, properly to stammer." (Marvin R. Vincent, *Word Studies*.)

"Formed from a word which reproduces the repeated attempts of the stammerer, etc." (Plumtree.)

"Probably it (*Batta-logein*) is as Hesychius suggests, an onomatopoeticon after the analogy of *Batta-ridzein*, an imitation of stammering." (Lange Trans. by Schaff.)

"*Batta-logeo* = *Batta-ridzein*, to speak stammeringly, to say the same thing over and over again. Matt. Simplicius." (Liddell and Scott, *Greek Lexicon*.)

Now we are ready to watch the game. Usually it is played with three shells, but two or four can be used. Here, as we see, from the quotations above only two are used, and they are labelled respectively, "*Batta-logein*" and "*Batta-ridzein*." The latter, *Batta-ridzein* is a classical word and means to stammer. "To stammer," is the name written in its kernel, and this kernel has been removed from its little shell and is to be used in the game. The other word, *Batta-logein*, about which this whole pamphlet is written, means: To speak much. But this meaning (its kernel) has been cut out and thrown away, leaving its shell empty, and thus making room for the other little kernel, "To stammer," which is to be slipped under its shell.

If we could only have the gentlemen present who made the assertions given above, I should like to have a little conversation with them somewhat like the following:

DEVETTE: "The original word means to stammer."

What do you mean by the original word? *Batta-logein*, or some other word that has no existence in Greek literature, but which you suppose once existed?

MANSFIELD : "The original word literally means to stammer."

Since you use the present tense we suppose that you are speaking of the word found in St. Matthew, Batta-logein. Very well ; now, is there one single sentence to be found in any book or document ; an inscription to be found on any house, or vase, or coin, anywhere, in which Batta-logein means to stammer? No. Not one.

ANGLICAN BISHOPS et al. : "The original word literally meant to stammer."

Is not that a rather rash assertion, Your Lordships, since not a single instance can be brought forward in which it has ever had this meaning? Are you even able to point out a few men, no matter of what tribe or tongue or nation, prior to the rise of Protestantism, who ever said or thought that Batta-logein meant to stammer? No. Not one.

INTERNAT. ILL. COM. : "The correct sense of the Greek word is given in our English version."

We have shown that it is not given in your English Protestant version. It is given in the Catholic version.

INTERNAT. COM. : (Literally to speak stammeringly.)

Whether it did literally ever mean to stammer or not, that is not its meaning in St. Matthew, and since it would not affect the correct meaning of the word (that found in Catholic versions,) I should be delighted to grant what Protestants are demanding as its primary meaning, if there were even a ghost of a reason for it.

MEYER : "As Hesychius correctly perceived."

Hesychius never mentions nor alludes to the word at all. It is rather comical to hear that Hesychius correctly perceived something about a word that he never mentions.

MEYER : "It is to be regarded as a case of onomatopoeia."

Hesychius never said that or anything else about Batta-logein. He said it about another word, *Batta-ridzein*. Now we see the little shell game in operation; this statement of his about one word, *Batta-ridzein*, is deftly slipped under the other word.

MEYER: And meaning properly speaking to stammer.

That is the proper meaning of Batta-ridzein. You are shoving its meaning under the other word (Batta-logein), where it does not belong.

LIDDELL & SCOTT, Greek. Lex.: Battalogein = Battaridzein.

This equation, which these distinguished lexicographers have put between these two words, gives evidence of their Protestant education, but not of their scholarship. There is as much reason for putting the sign of equality between these two words as for putting it between the phrases: very logical and very risible.

LIDDELL & SCOTT.: "To speak stammeringly."

This is the meaning of the second word, but not of the first. Batta, means stammeringly, they would have us believe, and logein, as every one knows, means to speak. Let us take their equation again:

Batta-logein = Batta-ridzein

Taking *Batta* from both sides we have:

logein = ridzein

It will be news for Greek scholars, that these two Greek words are synonyms. But this is absurd. *Batta* in both words means the same thing, it means *much*, as we have seen so many times. Batta-logein means to *speaking much* and Batta-ridzein means to *ridzein* (or stammer) *much*. Ridzein means to stammer, and Logein to speak.

LANGE: "Probably it (Batta-logein) is as Hesychius suggests."

This is certainly a clever way of putting it. Lange does not say that Hesychius said or perceived, he is more careful and accurate in his statements; he says only that Hesychius "suggests." This is not so flat footed and false a statement as those made by the other scholars. But would it not be more accurate still to say that John Peter Lange, D. D., and some other Protestant scholars *suggested* this, rather than Hesychius.

LANGE: "An onomatopoeicon after the analogy of Batta-ridzein."

Lange beats all the rest for cleverness at this little shell game; he does not say that Hesychius perceived or mentioned the word, but merely that he gives us a suggestion of an analogy between the two words, and since one probably got its meaning from its sound, and since both words are similar in sound and appearance, it is natural to infer that they both are also alike in sense, and so we have the meaning of one shoved under the other before our eyes and we have not noticed the transfer, our attention having been taken up with the words "probably," "suggests," "onomatopoeicon" and "analogy."

This little shuffling or juggling game with words, in which the meaning of one is slipped under the other, is the best foundation that Protestant scholars after three centuries of study have been able to construct for their vain repetition text. After having so solidly (!) established the fundamental meaning of "stammering" for "Batta-logein," they have put it in an etymological hot-house, where by careful nursing they think that they have been able to develop the meaning of vain repetitions out of this original stammer.

Protestant logic is truly a wonderful thing.

Kenrick, in his translation of Ecclesiasticus, gives us the following note, under chapter vii, verse 15: "Vain repetitions, without earnestness, are to be avoided. Matt. vi, 7."

It is a pity to see Kenrick retailing this silly Protestant nonsense. It is a wonder that he never asked himself what these Protestant "vain repetitions" were. What are vain repetitions, with earnestness? What are vain repetitions, without earnestness? Why is it that Protestants never say any thing about "vain petitions? Why is it that they have laid such an enormous stress on repetition?

CHAPTER XIV.

DOES BATTÀ, (OR BATTÀ-LOGEIN,) LITERALLY, MEAN
TO STAMMER?

We are not now searching for the meaning of Battà-logein. We know its meaning. It means, to speak much. Battà means much, it is a synonym for Poly. We are now making a study of Protestant logic, we are examining the sophistries by which Protestant scholars have tried to bolster up their new meaning of vain repetition, which they have attributed to Battà-logein; and we are going to the root of the matter, we are examining the first meaning "To stammer," which they have attached to the word, and from which later on they have extracted vain repetition.

There is a classical Greek word, *Battà-ridzein*, which means to stammer. Hesychius said that he thought that this was an imitative word, one whose sound indicated its meaning. Many Protestant scholars have tried to shove its meaning under the other word, *Battà-logein*, and they have tried to make poor Hesychius responsible for what they have done.

Hesychius thought that the word *Battà-ridzein* somewhat resembled a stammer, and that it got its meaning from its sound.

But which part of this word appeared to Hesychius to resemble a stammer? Was it *Battà*, or *Ridzein*? Let us see.

CHAPTER XV.

BATTA, BATTO, BAT(T).

All the codices of St. Matthew do not agree as to the spelling of this word. The Vatican codex B has *Batta*, the now generally received reading. But other manuscripts have *Batto*, the reading preferred by Lachmann and Tregelles.

Other manuscripts still have *Bato* (only one t). But whatever the termination or connecting vowel may be, whether *a* or *o*, the stem of the word is but one syllable, *bat* or *batt*; and it does not matter much, as far as the sound to sense argument is concerned, whether there is one *t* or two in this root or stem.

Now let the reader use his ears and his common sense, let him look up all the information that he can find on stammering and stuttering, and all the works (unprejudiced by the Protestant text) on onomatopoeia, and I shall ask him, if the sound BAT resembles a stammer any more than does Cat, Fat, Hat, Mat, Pat, Rat, Sat, Vat? It does not. Even if you repeat the syllable, and say Bat, Bat, Bat; how does that resemble a stammer any more than Cat, Cat, Cat; or, Rat, Rat, Rat?

We have all heard people stammer and stutter. B-b-b-boy, w-w-w-what's th-th-th-that? will do to represent a stammer. But any man who can say Bat, bat bat; or, Bat-ta, Bat-ta, Bat-ta, has no stammer or stutter in his speech; but, on the contrary, he has as much fluency as could be desired. So ridiculously childish is some of the Protestant argumentation used to support their vain repetition text, that if people fed on very much of such intellectual chaff it ought to be enough to induce paresis.

Hesychius does not say that Batta is an onomatopoeic word.

He says that Batta-Ridzein is, and it was evidently the latter, or "*Ridzein*," part of the word, that seemed to him to be an imitation of a stammer.

What reasons have we for thinking so?

First of all, the fact, as we have seen, that there is no resemblance between the sound *Bat*, and a stammer; and there is no reason for thinking that Hesychius thought so. Secondly, the parallel example that he gives us proves that he did not. He tells us that "*Batta-Ridzein*" seemed to him an imitative word, just as "*Pop-Pudzein*," (meaning to chirp, chirrup, or whistle with the lips compressed), is an imitation of these sounds. Now, which part of "*Pop-Pudzein*" sounds like a chirp, chirrup, or whistle? Certainly not the first part, *Pop*. *Pop-pop-pop* is not a chirrup or a whistle. It is evidently, then, the *Pudzein* part, with its sibilant, chirruping or whistling letter *Z*. And since it is the "*Pudzein*" part of the word, that made Hesychius think that the other word, "*Batta-Ridzein*," was also of imitative origin, is it not then the similar, sibilant, or "*Ridzein*" part of the word that appeared to him to have a parallel, imitative sound and sense? There is certainly no more stammer in *Bat* or *Batta* than there is chirrup in *Pop*.

I think that we shall correctly interpret Hesychius by saying that the repetitive or vibratory letter "*R*," together with the sibilant "*Z*," make a pretty fair imitation of a stammer or a stutter, and hence it seemed to him that "*Batta-Ridzein*" was formed from its sound. In our English words stammer, stutter, and lisp, the sibilant "*S*," with the "*t*" or "*p*" following, gives these words a somewhat imitative sound of stammering, stuttering and lisp. But no one, no matter what his language might be, unless his ears have been specially attuned by Protestant scholarship, has been able to perceive an imitation of stammering or stuttering in such sounds as *Batta* or *Bat*.

The words of N. Schow to the reader of his edition of the *Lexicon* of Hesychius, are worthy of the consideration of Protestant exegetes. "*Hesychii Lexicon, cum omnium doctissimum sit omniumque vitiosissimum, doctissimum et acutissimum interpretem exegit.*"

We have then examined the chief foundation that Protestants have to support their vain repetition text (Mat. vi-7), and we find that it is the sound "Bat" or "Batt," which they think resembles the sounds or efforts of a stammerer. We think not, but if we were to grant it, what would follow? It would follow that the word "Batta-logein" (Matt. vi-7), MIGHT have meant to stammer, that's all. We could never infer that the word actually ever did have this meaning. As a matter of fact, we know that in all the Greek literature that we possess, it did not.

CHAPTER XVI.

BATTUS THE POET.

Suidas gives a poet named *Battus* as the probable etymological ancestor of *batta*. Whether the word *Battologia* was used before this poet Battus was born or not, I do not know; Suidas does not tell us whether he lived shortly before his time, or one thousand, or two thousand years before him, but since the Greek name *Battos* was about as common as our Dick or Tom, doubtless there were several poets of that name, both good and bad, as well as several butchers, and bakers and candlestick makers, but Suidas, although giving his opinion that *Battologia* was derived from some poet named *Battus*, never said that it meant repetition or vain repetition: the only meaning he gives the word is the correct one, *much speaking*.

The word *batta* might be derived from some poet named *Battos*, or from *Battos* a bramble, from *Batas* a measure, or *Batos* passible, or *Bathus* deep, or from a number of other words, but all these etymologies are only guesses; we cannot say with certainty that *batta* is derived from any one of them, and even if we could, that would not determine the meaning of *batta* in St. Matthew; words of opposite meanings may come from the same etymological source.

One might make a guess that cattle was derived from cats, and rattle from rats, and it certainly is about as good as the derivation of *batta* from *Battus*. However, as several Protestant scholars have approved of this etymological origin, we must give it a little consideration.

Batta—nugor, deblatero, unum et idem verbum saepius repeto ut Battus ille poeta in hymnis suis de cujus ineptiis Ovidius in Meta. "Montibus, inquit, erant et erant in montibus." (Gualtperius Critici Sacri—cf. also Grotius).

Modern Protestant scholars reject this derivation, and well they might, but before putting it aside, in justice to Suidas it must be said, that he never stated that the poet named *Battus* was mentioned by Ovid. The man named *Battus* whom Ovid mentions was a rustic not a

poet. Erasmus deserves the credit of having made this blunder, and the majority of Protestant scholars three centuries ago, took his word for it, and kept on repeating his mistake without looking in Ovid to see if what Erasmus said was so. Here is what Ovid has to say :

Apollo neglecting his herd, Mercury steals it—"hides them, driving them off to the woods. Nobody but an old man well known in that country had noticed the theft; all the neighborhood called him Battus. Mercury was afraid of him and took him aside and said to him: "Come stranger, whoever thou art, if perchance anyone should ask after these herds, deny that thou hast seen them; and lest no requital be paid thee for so doing, take a handsome coin for thy reward," and thereupon he gave him one. On receiving it the stranger gave this answer. "Thou mayst go in safety. May that stone first make mention of thy theft," and he pointed to a stone. The son of Jupiter feigned to go away. But soon he returned, and changing his form, together with his voice, he said: "Countryman if thou hast seen any cows pass this way give me thy help and break silence about the theft, a female coupled together with its bull shall be presented to thee as a reward." But the old man after his reward was thus doubled, said: "*They will be underneath those hills*," and beneath those hills they really were.

The son of Atlas laughed and said: Doest thou, treacherous man, betray me to myself? Doest thou betray me to myself? and he turned his perjured breast into a stone. (Ovid. Meta. ii. Fable xii. Trans. by Henry T. Reilly B. A.)

The tautology of which this countryman Battus was guilty, and which has given him such prominence in Protestant commentaries, is found in the following line.

"In montibus, inquit, erunt," et erant in montibus."

If our Protestant brethren looked at the line twice they would have found that Battus spoke as concisely as a man could speak. "*They will be underneath those hills*," he said, not a single word or syllable did he repeat. The next sentence: *and beneath those hills they were*, is a statement not of Battus but of Ovid, affirming that what Battus said was true.

In attacking the old church some of our Protestant scholars seem to become bereft of their wits. To sum up: Suidas, although deriving *Batta-logia* from some poet named *Battus*, never gave the word any other meaning than that of "much speaking," which is correct. The Battus mentioned by Ovid was not a poet but a rustic, and the words that this Battus used are entirely free from tautology.

CHAPTER XVII.

BATTUS—KING.

Suidas, besides giving us his opinion that *Batta-logia* was derived from some poet named Battus, tells us that others thought that the word was derived from *Battus*, a Libyan king. Suidas is the first to give us this information. Whether he is merely repeating what he thought he found in Hesychius, or is giving us information that he got from some other source is not evident, but if his information about the King-Battus origin of *batta* is derived solely from Hesychius, Suidas read him carelessly, for Hesychius gives no etymology for the noun *battalogia* and does not mention *battalogo* at all. But although some of those who lived before the Protestant Reformation made a guess that *Batta* was derived from some Libyan king who-stammered, none of them thought that the word *batta* in St. Matthew meant to stammer, or, to use vain repetitions.

Battos was a Libyan word meaning king ; because a certain man who stammered was made a Libyan *Battos* (or king), it is as absurd to infer that therefore *Battus* means a stammerer as to say that because a certain man who stammered was made a general, therefore our English word general means a stammerer. Here is what Heroditus has to say :

Herod. IV. ch. 155. At Thera Polymnestus one of the chief citizens of the place took Phronima to be his concubine. The fruit of this union was a son who stammered and had a lisp in his speech. According to the Cyrenaeans and Theraeans the name given to the boy was Battus : in my opinion he was called at first something else and only got the name Battus after his arrival in Libya, assuming it either in consequence of the words addressed to him by

the Delphian oracle or on account of the office which he held, for in the Libyan tongue the word " Battus " means a king. And this, I think, was the reason why the Pythoness addressed him as she did : she knew he was to be a king in Libya and so she used the Libyan word in speaking to him.

Note 4. It is curious that Heroditus was ignorant of the name given in the myth to the first Battus before he received that appellation from the oracle.....The name was Aristotle.

The proverb " Battou silphion," which was used for all that was expensive and honorable, is referred by common consent to him. (Chap. 159.)

(History of Heroditus. Eng. version by Geo. Rawlinson, M. A., London, 1880.)

This king was known as Battus I., his successors were Battus II., Battus III., Battus IV.

Two foreigners were admiring some paintings at an artists' exhibition, one a picture of a rapid river by Ivan Romanhoff attracted their attention. The river, its banks, the sky, and some animals grazing near by were all well done, but it was evident that the river was the chief feature of the picture. Under it was the inscription, "*A Rushing River.*" One of them asked his companion the meaning of this inscription. He knew a few words of English, of which river was one, but the word "rushing" puzzled him. However, looking at the name of the artist and at the scene itself, he answered confidently in a moment, it means: "*A River in Russia.*" He thought that a rushing river and a Russian river meant the same thing. There is as much foundation for the identification of rushing and Russian as there is for the various Battus origins of *batta*.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WAS REPETITION CHARACTERISTIC OF PAGAN PRAYERS?

No, it was not. It was more characteristic of the inspired prayers and praises in the Holy Scriptures. However, Protestant scholars found it necessary to try to prove that it was, in order to defend their new translation and interpretation of *Batta* in Matt. vi-7. The learned Grotius hunted up a quotation from Terence, which he alleges to prove that the pagans were addicted to repetition in praising their deities, and he adds, what is said in Terence of thanksgiving is true also of their petitions as the hymns of the Greeks show. Here is the quotation on which his argument rests :

CHERMES. "Hold now, do, wife, leave off dinning the gods with thanksgivings that your daughter has been discovered unless you judge of them by your own disposition, and think that they understand nothing unless the same thing has been told them a hundred times.

(Heauton. Act. v. Sec. i. Lit. Trans. by Henry Thomas Reilly, B. A.)

Grotius adds, that to say the same thing a hundred times is what is meant by *Battalogein*. We have already seen that this is not its meaning. But now for the illustration from Terence :

Chremes, a hard hearted father, told his wife Sostrata when she was pregnant, if she gave birth to a girl he would not support it. The child was a girl, so Sostrata had to either kill it or expose it. She chose the latter, hoping that some one who would find it and would have pity on it. Sostrata put a ring on the child's finger and gave it to an elderly woman to take away. Nothing was ever heard of her from that day. Several years after a

beautiful maiden and a friend of hers were visitors at Chremes' house. One day when this maiden was going to bathe she left her ring to Sostrata, who recognised it as the ring that she had given to her lost daughter. So here is her daughter back again in her own home. The dialogue between Chremes and Sostrata shows us what an affectionate way he had of addressing his wife :

SOS. "Do you remember me being pregnant and yourself declaring to me, most peremptorily, that if I should bring forth a girl you would not have it brought up?"

CHREM. I know what you have done, you have brought it up.

SOS. Not at all, but.....I gave it to be exposed..... Alas! what have I done? If I have acted wrong, my dear Chremes, I have done so in ignorance.

CHREM. This, indeed, I know for certain, even if you were to deny it. that in everything you both speak and act ignorantly and foolishly: How many blunders you disclose in this single affair! For, in the first place, then, if you had been disposed to obey my orders, the child ought to have been dispatched.

Sostrata tells her husband the whole story, how the child was exposed and how she is still alive, and how she discovered her by means of the ring. Instead of being furiously angry, as his wife dreaded, Chremes has no fault to find at the way things have turned out, in fact he is rather pleased, for his daughter turns up conveniently, as a bride for the son of a friend of his. Sostrata is overjoyed at the return of her daughter and delighted to find that her husband has taken the matter so coolly.

The discovery of her lost daughter and Sostrata's conversation with her husband about it takes place in the first scene of the fourth act of the play. We will skip the other scenes and come to the first scene of the fifth act. The scene opens with the entrance of Menedemus talking to himself and giving his opinion of his friend Chremes in the following words :

"I am quite aware that I am not so overwise or so very

quick sighted ; but this trainer, prompter, and coacher of mine, Chermes, outdoes me in that. Any one of those epithets which are applied to a fool is suited to myself, such as dolt, post, ass, lump of lead ; to him not one can apply ; his stupidity surpasses them all."

Towards the end of this elegant little soliloquy, Chermes enters ; he is supposed to be talking to his wife, whom he is just leaving, and who is supposed to be behind the curtains ; just as Menedemus finishes, he enters, saying to his wife within :

" Hold now, do, wife, leave off dinning the gods with thanksgivings that your daughter has been discovered ; unless you judge of them by your own disposition, and think that they understand nothing, *unless the same thing has been told them a hundred times.*

But in the meantime, why does my son linger there so long with Syrus ?

Menedemus catches these last words and asks :

MEN. " What persons do you say are lingering ?

Chermes hearing himself addressed and seeing Menedemus, says :

CHREM. " Ha ! Menedemus, you have come opportunely. Tell me, have you told Clinia what I said ? "

and then the dialogue between the two goes on.

When Sostrata found that her husband Chermes tolerated their daughter's return, it was quite natural for her sometimes to give expression to her joy and gratitude, even in Chermes' presence, by saying : the gods be praised for our daughter's return. A hard hearted irascible crank like Chermes might tolerate such an expression once, possibly twice, but the next time he heard it Sostrata would be likely to be notified in his polite way of speaking, to have no more to say on that subject.

Sostrata evidently said " Thank the gods " once too often to suit Chermes, and got the rebuke that served to get Chermes on the stage again, and which introduces his dialogue with Menedemus in a natural manner. And

this is the best proof Protestants can find in pagan literature to prop up their views about pagan repetition. Now how many times did Sostrata say: "Thank the gods, my daughter is home again?" (or whatever expression she used?) From the line in Terence, can we infer that she said it more than three or four times? Just ask someone with a snappish irascible nature like Chremes to do something two or three times and see what he will say: How many times are you going to ask me? Do you think I'm deaf? and that you've got to ask me a hundred times? Few persons of ordinary common sense will take the exaggerated expressions of ugly, angry people, literally.

Next, Chremes and Sostrata were both pagans; which of the two best represent pagan customs? Sostrata several times thanks the gods, Chremes reproves her for it and says implicitly: *Once is enough to tell the gods a thing*, do you think they are as stupid as yourself so that they understand nothing unless they are told it a hundred times?

Picking out a stray sentence here and there (and out of its context too), is like the man who went down to the beautiful white sands of Yawa beach and hunted about until he found a few grains of red sand or brick dust, which he brought home and labeled: "Yawa beach sand," and all who saw it wondered and said: What a funny and ugly place that red beach must be. This Protestant style of argument is truly a wonderful thing; supposing that Sostrata or even two or three other pagans do something, does it follow that it is a pagan custom? If you read in the papers that two or three Americans drank carbolic acid will you say that carbolic acid is an American drink?

What is astonishing is that just after giving the quotation from Terence, he gives another quotation which opposes and neutralizes the first. Against this custom (which he imagines to exist amongst the pagans, but which did not), he alleges a quotation from Plautus: "Let divine worship be done with few words," and he also gives other quotations from pagan writers which contain nothing at all of repetition, and which are nega-

tive arguments to show that repetition in prayer or praise was not a pagan custom. So much for Grotius' illustration and proof of pagan repetition.

There is no pagan poem that has as much repetition as The Bells, or The Raven, or even as Tennyson's Bugle song. No pagan prayers had as much repetition as the inspired prayers of the Scriptures; the whole of pagan literature can furnish us nothing like the following :

"I will bless the Lord at *all times*, his praise shall be *always* in my mouth." Psalm xxxiii. (xxxiv) i.

"My tongue shall speak.....of thy praise *all the day long*." Psalm xxxiv. (xxxv) 28.

"My praise shall be *continually* of thee." Psalm lxx. (lxxi) 6.

"In God shall we glory *all the day long*; and in thy name we will give praise *forever*." Psalm xliii-9 (xliv-8).

"From the *rising of the sun unto the going down of the same*, the Lord's name is to be praised." Psalm cxii-3 (cxiii) A. V.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE REAL, ORIGIN OF THE PROTESTANT TEXT.

It is not pleasant to suspect, still less, to accuse our neighbors of dishonesty, of blind bigotry, of unwillingness to hear the other side, of wilfully mutilating or mistranslating any text of Holy Scripture, and I will not do so, but it is necessary to mention *Hatred of the Catholic Church* as one of the most prominent and most common features in the explanations of the Protestant text, and I think that it would be impossible to explain the origin and development of vain repetition, and the amount of ingenious study and manipulation given to the word *batta*, if the anti-Catholic animus, now happily passing away, of Protestant scholars be left out of sight. No matter how much they disagree about which of the several origins should be assigned to BATTA, and as to exactly what it means after it has been translated, there is a universal consensus that it must mean something or other that we Catholics do. If the text did not afford Protestants an opportunity of attacking the Catholic Church, the Protestant paraphrase would never have been invented, certainly its existence cannot be satisfactorily accounted for, unless anti-Catholic hatred is admitted to have had a share in its genesis and in its continued use. I will give a few quotations showing the efforts that Protestants make to prove us guilty of breaking Christ's commandment (Mt. vi-7). After having put the Protestant meaning in the text, the poor old Catholic Church is always dragged in as an illustration with some remarks about heathenism and superstitious practices, false religions, shameful perversion of prayer, etc., etc.

"The repetitions of Pater Nosters and Ave Marias in the *Romish Church* as practised by them are in direct violation of this precept. (St. Mt. with S. S. notes. Johnson [Alford].)

"Such also are the Pater Nosters and Ave Marias of the *Romish Church*. Nothing can be more directly opposed to this injunction of Christ, etc." (Owen Com. for Bible classes and S. S.)

"The same usage prevails largely amongst the adherents of all false religions." (Inter. Ill. Com. by Am.-Eng. scholars of various Evang. Den. Ed. by Philip Schaff, p. 66.)

N. B. All false religions.

"To stammer, then to babble or prate, to repeat the same formula many times, as the worshippers of Baal and of Diana, of Ephesus, and of the Romanists with their Pater Nosters and Aves." (Marvin R. Vincent. Word Studies).

N. B. See how the pagan worshippers of Baal and Diana, and the Romanists are all put together.

"This method of *heathen* devotion is still observed by Hindoo and Mohamedan devotees.....In the Church of Rome not only is it carried to a shameless extent, but as Tholuc justly observes, the very prayer which our Lord gave as an antidote to vain repetition is the most abused to this *superstitious* end.....Is not this just that characteristic *feature of heathen devotion* which our Lord here condemns?" (Jamieson, Fausset & Brown).

N. B. Hindoos, Mohamedans and the Church of Rome all classed together.

"It has often been remarked in corrupt Christian churches, one of the earliest and worst perversions of the truth is the adoption of the very error which our Lord describes as heathenish, and in relation to the very prayer here given to prevent it.....a more cogent reason why the Christian cannot practise them (i. e. vain repetitions) to wit, because they rest upon a grovelling contracted view of the divine perfections, etc." (Alexander).

N. B. Corrupt Christian churches—worst perversions of the truth—grovelling contracted view.

"Vain repetitions—ill. by *Roman Catholic repetitions* of Pater Nosters, Creeds, Aves, etc." (Ray's Bib. Museum).

Quotations enough to fill several volumes might be given, but these are a sufficient number of samples to show the anti-Catholic animus pervading the Protestant vain-repetition text and its exegesis.

CHAPTER XX.

SOME NEW PROTESTANT SINS.

When Protestant scholars decided on vain repetitions as a translation of BATTÀ, it became necessary in their commentaries to tell us what they mean by vain repetitions, to let us know what sort of a sin was condemned by the words which they found in their Bibles. It was a foregone conclusion that BATTÀ, or its Protestant translation must mean something or other that the Catholic Church does or teaches, but Protestant scholars find it very difficult to agree in specifying exactly what is condemned by these words. Some seem to think that repetition in itself is vain; others think the text is denouncing unmeaning irrelevant repetitions; others see superstitious repetition in it. Some can even see a sin in the use of synonyms, others in making number and length the point of observance, and if one had patience to read many Protestant works he might find a number of other Protestant sins evolved out of vain repetitions. One thing quite noticeable is that these scholars in giving their different opinions about the vain-repetition text do not seem to think it necessary to prove their assertions. I will give a few quotations and add some comments :

I. THE SIN OF REPEATING OFTEN.

ROSENMULLER : "Do not repeat the same words often. BATTÀ means to say the same thing very often."

GROTIUS : "*To repeat the word* (Ecclus. 7-15) is the same thing that is here called BATTÀ.

BEZA : In praying do not babble the same thing as the heathen.

GUALPERIUS : BATTÀ means to often repeat the same word.

But we find other learned Protestants contradicting their brethren and saying : "The precept is *not* directed against the frequent repetition of earnest prayer. Our Lord's own example sanctions the use of long and repeated prayers. (Cook).

GRAY: Bib. Museum in margin. "It is not repetition but vain repetition, empty of heart and devoid of hope that is here rebuked."

Repetition and everything else that is vain, if vain means "empty of heart, devoid of hope," is condemned by the whole world, still that is not what is meant in the text by *much speaking*.

If Protestants could only agree as to what VAIN means in their text it would be a consolation, but as they cannot we have to let each one have his own way of attacking his Catholic brethren.

OWEN: "However this may be (about the origin of BATTA) the word here unquestionably refers to long continued prayer filled with irrelevant unmeaning repetitions."

A man who uses *irrelevant unmeaning* repetition has no sense. It is rather odd to think that our Saviour should give such a useless prohibition. But does the gentleman mean that the Lord's Prayer, or any other prayer loses its meaning by being repeated?

COOK: "The precept is not against the frequent repetition of earnest prayer, but against the superstitious repetition of a form in the hope of being better heard by God, which is the point of Elijah's taunt, etc."

If perseverance in prayer, the tireless renewal of our request until God is pleased to grant it, is *superstitious* repetition, then that sort of superstition is very strongly recommended by Christ. This is *not* the point of Elijah's taunt; the author misses the point as I have shown above.

2. THE SIN OF SYNONYMS.

"Or do not use long and vain speeches, for the Greek word BATTA signifies either the absurdity of and the *vanity of repetition* or of an excessive length.....AS THE HEATHEN DO, who were wont to fill their prayers with abundance of *synonymous names* which they bestowed on their gods, *making therein to consist the praises and prerogatives of those deities.*"

(A new version of the Greek of St. Mat. with a literal comment on all difficult passages by DE BEAUSOBRE and LENFANT, by order of the King of Prussia. Note).

To mention "synonymous names" as though there were something wrong in synonyms is so absurd that it is amazing that any sensible man should put such nonsense in print. However skillful the pagans may have been in the use of synonyms and repetition, the Scriptures can surpass them. Let a Protestant open his Bible at the 136th Psalm and read it. The psalm contains 26 verses. Half of the psalm is made up of synonyms, the other half of repetition. In every verse we have "*an abundance of synonymous names bestowed on God, making therein to consist His praises and prerogatives.*"

3. THE SIN OF NUMBER AND LENGTH.

"What is forbidden in this verse is not much prayingnot praying in the same words.....but making number and length a point of observance, and imagining that prayer will be heard, not because it is the genuine expression of the desire of faith, but because it is of such a length, has been such a number of times repeated. The repetitions of pater-nosters and ave marias in the Romish Church, as practised by them, are in direct violation of this precept, the number of repetitions being prescribed and the efficacy of the performance made to depend on it." (St. Mt. with S. S. notes. Internat. Series. [Alford])

ALFORD: "What is forbidden is.....*making number and length* a point of observance."

What reasons has Dean Alford to give in support of his assertion? None whatever. His is merely a wild assertion without anything in Scripture or common sense to back it. If he would only reflect he could recall several of the psalms in which *number and length* and even the *letters of the alphabet* numbered in order throughout their entire length are a very prominent *point of observance*. Eight of the psalms are alphabetical; the first verse begins with A, the second with B, and so on until the alphabet is exhausted. In the 119th psalm there are 22 stanzas, each stanza composed of *eight verses* and each verse of the stanza beginning with the same letter; the eight lines of the first stanza begin each with A; the

eight verses of the second stanza begin each one with B, and so on until the alphabet is exhausted. Is there any example of divine prayer or praise used in which number and length are made such a *special point of observance* in the Catholic Church as in this psalm? There is no more harm in making number and length a point of observance in reciting our prayers than in anything else, and as it is a help to fix one's attention in other things so it is in prayer.

ALFORD: "Imagining that prayer will be heard, not because it is the genuine expression of the desire of faith, but because it is of such a length, has been such a number of times repeated."

Our prayers are heard simply because God wants to hear them. He loves us and wants to do whatever is good for us. He puts the thought of asking into our minds and then grants what He has moved us to ask for. But God does not usually grant what we want the first time that we ask it, or the second. He wants us to persevere in asking, hence one is right in expecting his prayer to be heard because it is a number of times repeated, not however, "*such a number of times*" because God has not specified the number, nor has anyone else. When Peter was in prison (Acts xii-5) the faithful prayed for his deliverance; the first and second and third time that they prayed their prayer was not granted, but by *continually* repeating it at last it was heard and Peter was freed

4. MECHANICAL AND MATHEMATICAL SINS.

PLUMPTREE: "The words (Mt. vi-7) describe only too faithfully the act of prayer when it becomes mechanical."

They describe nothing of the sort, but if so, what then?

PLUMPTREE: "The devotion of the Rosary, in which every bead is connected with a Pater Noster or an Ave Maria does but *reproduce* the 18 prayers of the rabbis, which they held it to be an act of religion to repeat."

I cannot see the connection between the two or

how one is a *reproduction* of the other. This author cannot see it either, he is merely indulging in loose rambling talk. What fault can any sensible man find with the 18 beautiful prayers of the rabbis? "An act of religion to repeat them"? I hope so, what else should we call it?

ALFORD: "The repetitions of Pater Nosters, etc., in the Romish Church as practised by them are in direct violation of this precept, the number of repetitions being prescribed....."

What strange insanity sometimes takes possession of Protestant scholars when they begin to speak of the Catholic Church.

What does Alford mean by this? Is a *definite* number of recitations of a prayer a sin? Is it a sin to say the Lord's Prayer three times for example in honor of the Most Blessed Trinity, and no harm to say it four or five or six times, provided we do not notice how often we say it? How can any sensible man write such stuff. Does he think that God has placed such petty restrictions on the liberty of his children? If Alford is right he must think that the Protestant text is wrong and should be amended to read "Use not a *definite* number of repetitions." If a definite number of prayers is wrong why not a definite number of other things? The sin that Alford imagined that he discovered in the Protestant text might be called the *mathematical sin*. Many Protestant writers have a horror of everything definite in religious matters, they seem to think that religion is almost synonymous with fog.

ALFORD: "The number of repetitions being prescribed."

The number of repetitions are prescribed in Psalm 119: Eight repetitions of each letter of the alphabet. What then? When the prophet told Naaman to go and wash in the Jordan, the number of washings was prescribed. Seven times. And until the prescribed number was completed he was not cured (iv [II] Kings v-14.) So "prescribed numbers of repetitions" have God's direct sanction.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE LORD'S PRAYER IMPUGNED.

Some Protestant scholars perhaps discouraged at the hopelessness of agreeing as to what Protestants mean by their "vain repetition" text, and thinking that the Lord's Prayer is "the greatest martyr," "the most abused of all prayers," "the most employed for superstitious ends," &c., &c., &c., thought that the best cure for vain repetitions, whatever they may be, was to discourage the use of the Lord's Prayer by throwing cold water on it. The following extracts and comments will suffice to show one drift of Protestant thought influenced by the "vain repetition" text.

PLUMPTREE: "How far our use of the Lord's Prayer, or of the Kyrie Eleison of the litanies is open to the charge of vain repetition is another question."

"Our use." What! Protestants breaking their own text and prohibition, indulging in vain repetitions? If so, how is it *another* question?

McCLINTOCK & STRONG CYCLO. ART. PATER NOSTER: "It is claimed by many Protestants that the prayer was not intended by Christ as a formula of Christian prayer because it contains no allusion to his atonement, nor recognises the office of the Holy GhostProtestants condemn the general use of it made by Romanists."

McCLINTOCK & STRONG CYCLO.: "The prayer was not intended by Christ as a formula of Christian prayer."

Such assertions almost take one's breath away. Christ said: *Thus* you shall pray, and *He did not mean* the prayer that he then gave His disciples as a formula of Christian prayer? The disciples asked Christ to teach them how to pray and He taught them this prayer, and

what He taught them He did not intend to be a formula of prayer? Is this not almost equivalent to saying that Christ was a fool?

McCLINTOCK & STRONG: "Not intended as a formula of Christian prayer, *because it contains no allusion to the atonement nor to the office of the Holy Ghost.*"

What prayer is there that Christ approved of and heard that mentions his atonement and the office of the Holy Ghost? Is every prayer to be an *explicit* act of faith in these two doctrines, why stop short at them and not require more? That prayer of the publican that merited such an explicit recommendation from Christ, "*O God, be merciful to me, a sinner.*" The prayer of the thief dying on the cross, "*Lord remember me when thou shalt come into thy kingdom.*" Our Saviour's own prayer for His executioners, "*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,*" contained no mention of, nor allusion to, the Holy Ghost. If one wants to find fault with anything it is not difficult to manufacture reasons, but these reasons given here are so foolish that they should never have been expressed.

Anyone who reads the following comments in the INTERNATIONAL Series of S. S. notes will not be induced by them to have too exalted an opinion of the Lord's Prayer.

"Our Lord did not intend this form of words to be always of necessity used by his followers for : &c."

Who says He did? A handful of heretics many centuries ago were of that opinion, but who is there who thinks so now? What is the object of proving what all admit unless to create in the minds of simple Protestants the impression that there are some (the wicked Romanists of course) who think it "always of necessity," and thus arouse their prejudices and opposition against the Lord's Prayer itself; if this is not what is aimed at what is it? But let us look at the proofs that are given to prove what needs no proving.

- I. "He (Christ) nowhere intimates such a design."
Does He anywhere intimate a design that any other

prayer should be used? Does He not repeat this prayer probably twice, and is there any other prayer that he says anywhere in the Gospels more than once?

2. His disciples asked Him to teach them how to pray and He gave them this prayer, saying "When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be thy name, &c." In St. Mt. in the Sermon on the Mount, Christ says: "Thus therefore shall you pray: Our Father, &c."

But let us see some more of the arguments:

3. "We do not find Jesus or His Apostles in the whole subsequent history once using this prayer in their devotions."

That certainly is a tricky argument, which will impress Sunday School teachers and scholars and simple people, but which ought to disgust a scholar. Earnest, honest Protestants should not tolerate anyone who will descend to such patent sophistry. We do not find Jesus or the Apostles using this prayer in their devotions. What prayer do we find them using in their devotions? Have we got a list? Do we not find them using this prayer twice, and what other prayer do we find them using more than once? What prayer do we find the Apostles using in their devotions *at all*?

Since Christ gave the Apostles this prayer when the Apostles asked Him to teach them how to pray, (Lk. xi.) the presumption is that they used this prayer, and we have no explicit mention of *any other* prayer that Christ ever said together with His Apostles.

Now for another of these delightfully logical arguments:

"4. If it had been intended as a ritual for all time it would have taught us to pray in the name of Jesus (Jo. 16, 23-24)."

This argument is a gem: its author evidently is writing for people who have not the ordinary modicum of intelligence.

Christ says in the reference given (Jo. xvi. 23-24) "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name he will give it you," &c.

Moreover St. Paul says (Col. iii-17), "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.*"

In the very first recorded prayer that the Apostles uttered a month or so later (Acts i-24) there is no explicit mention of the address to "*God, the Father, in the name of Christ.*" The prayer was: "Thou Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen." A. V.

St. Stephen in his prayer for himself (Acts vii-59) and for his persecutors (v. 60) does not explicitly ask the Father through Christ.

Praying (and doing all things) in the name of Jesus is praying *through and with Him*, asking to be heard for His sake, alleging His merits, not our own. All Christians form with Jesus a mystical body, we are the members, He is the head. Our prayers said in union with Him are His prayers rather than ours.

And when we wish to ask the Father to hear us for His sake, can our petition be more acceptable to God than when we ask for the very things which Christ taught us to ask for (in His prayer) and can we put our petition *in His name* better, and can we unite our prayers with His better than by reciting the very prayer which He taught us, and which opens with words uniting us all with one another and with Him our head when we say "OUR Father."

5. "The early churches did not use it."

What are the proofs? If not, what prayers did they use? What early Christian writer is there that says they did not? Is there any writer, early or late, before the time of the Reformation, that ever made such a false and foolish assertion? It would be interesting to know what reasons the writer has for making such an assertion, but he gives none.

ALFORD: "It must be confessed we find very few traces of its use in early times."

This is not so broad an assertion as the last. There are very few traces of anything in the very few writings that have come down to us from early Christian

times, what then? If we have any trace at all does not that show us that it was used? Have we not more traces, and much earlier traces of its use in the Christian assemblies than we have of the use of the Scriptures?

In the teaching of the Apostles is it not repeated in full, and are not the Christians directed to repeat it three times a day? (Apostolic Age—McGiffert p. 530).

THOLUC: "It does not occur in the Acts nor in any writer before the third century."

"It does not occur in the Acts, no, but it occurs twice in the Gospels, is not that enough? Is there any other prayer mentioned in the Gospels that occurs in the Acts? No. Why then should this be mentioned there?"

THOLUC: "Nor in any writer before the third century."

I will let one of Tholuc's brethren answer him:—

"The earliest set form of Christian prayer known to us is the Lord's prayer.....It is possible that the Aramaic word Abba* (Father) in Rom. viii-15 and Gal. iv-6 points to its common use in Paul's day. At any rate it was generally employed in the second century if not already in the first." (Apostolic Age. McGiffert p. 530).

WILLIAMS: "As to the early Christians we find one of the first of the Latin fathers stating explicitly that the leader in the Christian assemblies was accustomed to pray according to his capacity."

It would be better to give the Father's name and the place so that one might look it up. But never mind. What does Williams mean? Does he think that the extempore prayer-speeches were so popular in early times that the Lord's prayer, and all Liturgical prayer were practically discarded? If he does, all his brethren will not agree with him. Here is a quotation from McClintock's & Strong's Cycl.

"So far as regards the primitive or Apostolic Age, the

* "Ye have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry: Abba, Father. (Rom. viii.-15).

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only trace of anything of that kind is the Lord's prayer and the Amen alluded to in I Cor. xiv-16.....

That men, however, who had been accustomed to Liturgical worship under the old system should go into it under the new is not at all surprising.

"The form of prayer given by the Master would be the nucleus of these prayers." (Art Liturgy. Early church Liturgy).

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CHAPTER XXII.

ORIENTAL PRAYING MACHINES.

Travellers tell us that in parts of the East you will sometimes see a man seated or lying down, and whirling with his hand or by means of a string, a cylinder on which are carved some inscriptions. Most of the descriptions of Praying Machines that we have are written by those who regard them as instruments of superstitious worship. I have never seen a description by one who used them, and who could tell us why he did so—what he meant by whirling his cylinder around. It is better not to condemn these machines or anything else until we are sure of the purpose for which they are used.

Praying Wheels and Praying Machines are misnomers. It is not prayers but praises that are written on them. They are not used to petition God or the pagan deities for anything, but are used as expressions of praise. Praising Wheels is a proper name for them. They are sometimes put in public places where every passerby may give them a shove, if he will, and set them in motion; sometimes they are kept moving continuously by fastening them to water wheels placed in a stream, the running water making both revolve together. Sometimes these cylinders are filled with books, these have been styled by some one Scripture Wheels. William Simpson who made a special study of Praising Wheels wittily suggests the propriety of calling this latter class "circulating libraries." If the shooting of fireworks, the continual snapping and booming of crackers and cannon, the whirling of fire wheels, the waving of flags, are proper means of glorifying some national hero, or of celebrating some national festival, it would astonish an Oriental to tell him that all these motions and moving things that we might use in expressing our praise and

thanksgiving are right, and that the movements of his Praising Wheels are wrong. Whether it be the waving of a flag or the whirling of a Praise Wheel, as far as the motion goes, they both are indifferent. To find out whether they are good or bad, we must find out their meaning and the end for which they are done.

If the revolution of the cylinder be an outward concomitant expression of the inward desire accompanying it, that God may be continually glorified, and if it be an expression of the wish that we might be able to sing His praises as often as the wheel revolves, no fault can be found with it. There may be something in it that pleases the Oriental imagination, and until we find out what their object is in using it, we should abstain from condemning it. It may be an absurd and superstitious practise worthy of more contempt than it ever has received, but it is well to get more information before indulging in vehement denunciation. I like to see the words of Holy Writ, whether they be words of prayer or praise on the walls of our churches. If these words were put on a revolving cylinder it would remind me of the revolving advertising signs in show windows, and I would consider it most inappropriate and in the very worst of taste. However there is nothing intrinsically wrong in the motion of a cylinder accompanying one's prayers any more than there is in the motion of an ascending cloud of incense, which is a symbol of prayer, and which accompanied it, by God's own command, or in the motion of the flames of the seven flickering lamps which burned in the Holy Place. Catholics should be careful not to condemn any custom unless they are certain that they know what it means and that it is wrong. We should leave the invention of new sins to our Protestant brethren, and should rather rejoice at all good things done, no matter when, where, or by whom, and as for indifferent things we should allow every one the liberty to do them, or do them not, as he wills.

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